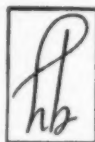


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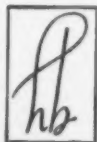
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Short Stories, 1950

EDITH R. MIRRIELEES¹

THE year 1950 was, in one respect, a banner year for short-story writers. More collections of stories written by one author appeared between cloth covers during that year than in any previous twelve months in a very long time.

Against this piece of good fortune, however, there must be balanced one less good. The number of stories published in magazines showed no advance, and continues to show none, from its recently established low-water mark. Especially in the so-called "quality" magazines, two stories in an issue, often only one, take the place of the four or five of the 1910's and 1920's. In large-size publications the falling-off is less conspicuous, but in these also less room was assigned to fiction, and especially to short fiction, in 1950 than was given it twenty or even ten years ago. A story writer solely dependent on magazine publication may now and then regard his future much as a livery-stable keeper regarded his own in the early automobile days. All the more, then, it is heartening that volumes of stories are again being brought out if not in quantity at least in respectable numbers. Stories included in these volumes go back, of course, to years earlier than

1950, some few of them, as in William Faulkner's *Collected Stories*, a long way back. Most, however, fall within the decade, and a fair sprinkling of them have not before been in print.

Readers, of course, share with writers the effects of both conditions. For the book-buying reader, this last has been the best year of many. Not only have books of stories been more plentiful but several have offered examples of distinguished writing. William Faulkner, whose Nobel prize is by no means the only reason for his heading the list; Walter Van Tilburg Clark; Wallace Stegner; Elizabeth Bowen; Irwin Shaw; Ray Bradbury²—all these are in the year's catalogues. Each of them in his own field lives up to his established reputation. Other volumes of stories, too, even some not in themselves containing distinguished work, are of interest nonetheless because of the light they cast on what writers are offering and publishers think worth putting into bindings at the half-century mark.

On the other hand, readers who get their fiction from magazines, those whose devotion to the story stretches from fifteen cents to fifty but not to three-fifty,

¹ Editor, *Pacific Spectator*; professor emeritus, Stanford University.

² Titles and publishers are listed at the end of this article.

have had thin fare. And nowhere within the year nor yet in the two decades before it has there appeared any nation-sweeping talent. Good stories have been published, competent stories, stories worth reading. Now and then some one of them—Steinbeck's "The Red Pony," Hemingway's "The Killers," Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path"—seems to have been read and, what is more, remembered by almost everybody who reads the shorter forms of fiction at all. All three of these writers, however, have for a considerable time poured most of their energy into novels. And not from any writer have there been successive short stories sufficiently impressive to dwarf the rest.

Earlier in the century some did dwarf the rest. Kipling, O. Henry, Katherine Mansfield—each of them swept across the country like an enjoyable epidemic. In 1910, in 1920, even in the 1930's, to discuss short stories at all would have been to discuss one or more of these three—their writing and their effect on other writers. If Katherine Mansfield's following was less than that of the other two, what it lacked in numbers it made up for in intensity of admiration. "Mansfield influence," "Kipling influence," "O. Henry influence"—no magazine editor of the time but can bear witness to the impact of all three. The year 1950 knew no such impact. No such overwhelming force, single or triple, has been at work on writers nor yet on the taste and convictions of readers. That none has been is a prime reason why the end of the half-century, with its present almost unlimited diversity, is a good time for stock-taking.

Stock-taking in any of the arts usually involves first a backward look. Alterations from year to year, no matter what the form under consideration, are likely

to be so small as to be invisible. 1948, 1949, 1950—nothing has happened. But add these invisibles together over a stretch of years, and changes stand out like signposts. Before these changes are considered, however, two familiar generalizations concerning writing and its effect on readers should be brought freshly to mind.

The first of these two is that what is written with gusto and read with ardor will, in a measure, affect the beliefs and emotions of the reader. When the same emotional attitude is presented over and over in varied fictional forms, its effect is increased with each presentation. And when the stories presenting a given attitude are widely and enthusiastically read by a rising generation, then the emotions stimulated, the ways of looking at life, which result from the reading will work themselves out in action when the generation concerned is no longer "rising" but risen. Kipling rather than O. Henry is here the inevitable illustration. Plenty of Americans of 1910 had never actually envisaged India at all until *Plain Tales* fell into their hands. Kipling's striking delineation, shown in a story after story in this and later volumes, of childlike natives guided for their good by impeccable Englishmen—1900, 1910 took them to their collective hearts, imbedded them in minds already rendered receptive by the sweep of moonlight-and-magnolia stories which had followed in the wake of the War between the States. Reading was not, of course, a sole influence, but reading did its part, whether in implanting or merely in strengthening in American minds the same condescension toward brown skins and yellow that already existed toward black.

At this point, however, we have to take account of a second generalization. Although the greater part of any reading

group, especially any young group, is habitually moved by a favorite author in the direction of that author's own predilections, the whole group is almost never so moved. Nearly always there is a minority which is influenced no less than the rest but influenced toward repudiation instead of acceptance. Writers, when young, are likely to be found in this minority; the same qualities which lead to their finally becoming writers lead too to their being critical of their time, sharply aware of its generally unrecognized cruelties. These two opposite effects, springing as they do from the same causes, make for that ebb and flow, that pendulum swing, so recurrent in fiction—and so disturbing to those readers of it whose tastes have been set in a given pattern.

Both these generalizations are readily illustrated from the stories of the last fifteen or twenty years; first, from the content of the stories themselves, then from the reception accorded them. With few exceptions and those unimportant ones, stories written now by American writers, if they touch on the subject of race at all, are, in effect, denunciations of that ingrained sense of white superiority just noted. And almost without exception the early ones among these stories provoked from readers a succession of outraged protests.

By 1950 the protests were pretty much a thing of the past. The changed attitude on the part of writers continues, and so, of course, do the stories showing it. It would be hard to point now to even one fiction writer of standing who has not shrugged off the white man's burden. A few essayists still carry it on their shoulders, a few more publicists, a fair number of platform rabble-rousers, but not short-story writers. Especially, not southern writers. From Faulkner down, these latter can be said not so much to have

shrugged the burden off as to have wrenched it off with violence. Their stories—Faulkner's most of all—are example piled on example of its debasing influence on white as well as on black or even more on white than on black. The properties so useful to fiction from the seventies even down to the twenties—the impoverished southern aristocrat, the faithful semicomical black servitor—are useful no longer.³

Other superiorities and derogations as prominent in the early century have vanished too. The raucous Menckanism of the twenties, the writer's scorn for his fellow-men and most of all for his fellow-American, is over and done with. Whether as a result of the leveling processes of two wars, whether merely from the swing of the pendulum, the sympathies of short-story writers are, in most instances, wider-awake than their scorns. And not in a long time—never, indeed, in the short history of American writing—have so many writers been in such hot revolt against the casual, removable cruelties, even apart from those of racial origin, which they observe in the life around them. It is one of the interesting symptoms of this change of tone that F. Scott Fitzgerald, in whose fiction pity habitually took the sting from scorn, is just now being brought again to wide notice and to republication.

The fictional treatments of these cruelties are as various as are the cruelties themselves. The one likeness is in author's attitude. Whether it is "The Falling Leaves," by Frances Gray Patton (*Stories from The New Yorker*, 1949), dealing lightly and half-amusedly with regional snobbishness; whether it is Irwin Shaw's "Act of Faith" (*Mixed Company*), which sets down one more item in

³ See O. Henry's "A Municipal Report" or "Thimble, Thimble" for late examples.

the long, blotted record of Gentile versus Jew; whether it is William Faulkner's "Wash" (*Collected Stories*), the more appalling because the callous brutality pictured in it is the brutality not of intention but of long habit—in each of these and in a thousand others, the writer is firmly on the side of the angels, places the reader there.

This intensification of the story writer's social consciousness came grain by grain, a little more and still a little more as the century wore on. Nobody can say how much of it will remain when a new generation replaces the present one. One prediction, however, seems reasonably safe. A depression of unprecedented weight, two hot wars, one cold one, a present state still unlabeled, and all this in half a century—they have placed what seem to be lasting marks on all other phases of national living; it is not unreasonable to suppose that they have done so on writing as well.

But social consciousness, though it may tinge most stories, is the inciting cause of no more than a fraction in any period. Along with the increase of stories which had their inception in somebody's resentment of some wrong, one or two other kinds have increased almost as strikingly. The kind to which the most critical notice has accrued is probably that of stories about childhood. Whether presented as a state of innocence or as a state of premature corruption, it is one to which an unprecedented number of writers are now turning.

Why they are is anybody's guess, and guesses in plenty have been made. One of these, often repeated and with some authority behind it, is that many young writers are just now coming into print, and that, being young, they have only the experiences of childhood to write

about. Birthday set against birthday, however, beginners of 1950 show little difference from those of, say, 1920. And it is difficult to suppose that less experience has been thrust upon the later comers. A tentative explanation of another sort emerges when several of the present stories of childhood are read in close succession; when some dozens have been so read, an illuminating likeness appears in many of them. With exceptions, of course, and with many differences in approach, the present-day stories of childhood are stories of retreat from an overcomplicated world. The retreat may be, and often is, into a world as painful as any known to today's adults, but it is nevertheless a world simplified. Its pleasures and terrors are drawn within a comprehensible dimension. The story of childhood, that is, is oftener than not an escape story and so is of a kind bound to swell in numbers as escape, however temporary, becomes more and more a pressing human need.

One of the avenues of this escape, perhaps the one most frequently offered, is by way of the reminiscent story. Mary McCarthy's "Yonder Peasant, Who Is He?" (*Stories from The New Yorker*, 1949) records a horrid childhood but one already so far past that the sufferer can look back on it with humor. Elizabeth Bowen's remarkable case history, "Ivy Grippled the Steps," in the volume of the same name, though not told in the first person, yet shows the grown man before it shows the victimized child he once was. In each, "these things are of the distant past" is implicit in way of telling. And even when, in Faulkner's "Two Soldiers," this is not so, there is yet a singleness, a kind of clarity, in the emotions depicted. The life shown is two-dimensional rather than three.

Escape stories are nothing new. Every

age has them. And certain kinds—stories of childhood, stories of the supernatural—are always found. An increase in stories of the supernatural was to be expected after World War II and came as expected. With a little interval between, a sort of catching of the writer's breath, such an increase follows every war and for obvious reasons.

Stories of childhood and supernatural stories counted out, however, other escape stories of this last half-century have carried a new handicap and so are written with a different flavor. In one of Elizabeth Robins' novels, published near the beginning of the century, an explorer is asked to point out the most fascinating of all countries. His hand moves across the map until it rests on the space marked "Unknown Territory." Unknown territory has been the region of escape in fiction since fiction began, but to readers of 1950 and later it is territory lost. Even after World War I, even as late as the early forties, a reader could orient himself with John Russell in the South Seas, with H. G. Wells in lands of sand and fez, and carry with him no hampering prior knowledge. He cannot now. He hardly ever can. World War II has spread everywhere a devastating realism. Escape by way of change of place on this earth is all but cut off. More and more escape stories, ~~then~~ are being located outside of earth. H. G. Wells brought his Martians to this globe; Ray Bradbury takes his humans to Mars. The moon, Mars, the rocket ship—all of them are providing settings for current fiction, and in greater and greater numbers.

Their necessary accompaniments are the pseudo-scientific stories, now to be found from "quality" magazine to comic book. These have so swelled in the past decade that science-fiction writers (the

"pseudo" has been dropped) now emulate other scientists, chemists and botanists and physicists, and draw together in conventions, one of them scheduled for autumn of the present year. Wells is forerunner here, too, and not quite the sole one. Almost up to the time of the atom bomb, however, a convention of science writers would have consisted of Wells addressing Wells—a not inconceivable phenomenon.

Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, perhaps especially the story "The Long Years," offers as good an example as is needed to mark the change of the present story of scientific marvels from its immediate predecessor. In Wells's "The New Accelerator" or "The Strange Case of Davidson's Eyes" (both found in *The Country of the Blind*) it is evident that, with Wells, the marvel makes the story; the characters are important only in so far as they set the marvel into action. With Bradbury, the emphasis falls otherwise. What is of highest interest is neither Mars itself nor the means of getting there or away from there; it is what happens to humans not yet fully Mars-conditioned, what happens to them when they have become so conditioned.

Stories of personal experience hold their own as they do in any age. Many are so lightly fictionized as to be hardly distinguishable from the article based on personal experience; and, of these many, many are war stories. They are, though, for the most part, war stories transformed. Set against, say, "The Yellow Burgee," which celebrated a Spanish War engagement (and "celebrate" is here the right word), set against almost any Civil War story or against many of those of World War I, these are of a different breed. *Mr. Roberts*, published first as a series of short stories, provides a fair example and one with which many

readers will be familiar. So does "Rest Camp on Maui," by Eugene Burdick (*Harper's Magazine*; *O. Henry Prize Stories*, 1947). So does Boris Ilyin's "Down the Road a Piece" (*Pacific Spectator*, winter, 1948), though here the mood is one of puzzlement and sadness, not of irritation. The episodes are not of war but of the backwash of war. The minor emotions dominate throughout. Boredom, irritation, anxiety, disgust, boredom again—these weigh down the pages. Gusto is gone. They stand, and the bulk of other World War II stories stand with them, at the farthest possible remove from the escape story. It is one of the continuing marvels of fiction that both kinds can be devoured by the same readers and with almost the same appetite.

One other variety of story which has grown mightily in the half-century deserves mention if only because it comes close to being a purely American invention. This is what may perhaps be called the process story. How to do something—weave, run a motorboat, land a barracuda without (or with) disaster, match a meal of southern cooking against one of northern—whatever the process, it becomes a main ingredient in the story. Fictions loaded with exact information were once the province of the boys' magazines. They have moved now; the pages of large-size publications especially abound with them. That they have moved accounts perhaps for the demise of the several boys' magazines, some of them excellent, which were alive twenty years ago.

In 1950, then, more stories depicting childhood; many more sparked by racial and economic oppressions; more dealing with marvels scientific and pseudo-scientific; no less of records of personal expe-

rience; more of those detailing a process—and yet in most magazines no enlargement of the pages given to fiction. New publications provide some new space, but it is questionable whether any greater number of these have been born and have survived in the half-century than have died in the same period. Page matched against page, the increase can hardly be other than slight. And though one story comes often under several of the classifications named, still it is evident that some forms and themes have lost popularity as spectacularly as some have gained it.

The disappearance of the surprise-ending story is the example that comes first to mind, a disappearance so obvious both in fact and in cause that it calls for no comment. The short detective story, though it has not disappeared, yet appears less and less often, crowded out presumably by science marvels. Both of these are changes readily accounted for, and changes chiefly in form, always more fluid than substance. More unexpected are some of the changes which seem to come from editors or readers or both having tired not of a given kind of story but of the place allotted to certain emotions within the story. The most striking of these can be traced through the pages of any of the "quality" magazines during the past year or two. Within these years there will be found hardly an instance of the story of young love. Married love, yes; illicit love, yes; maternal love in plenty; not anywhere the spring-time variety, whether leading to happy ending or to tragedy. *Romeo and Juliet* are out of fashion.

At first glance, but not at second, the large-size magazines seem to stand at the other extreme. There is a girl, there is a boy who wants her and wants her honorably in marriage if not in every story, at

least in five out of six. Even so, however, it is now only very rarely that the winning or not winning of the girl takes a central place. She—or, rather, the desire for her—incites the boy to action, she comes as the reward of that action successfully completed, but to the reader her importance is usually far less than that of other elements in the story. Her position is not unlike that of the prize book given for punctuality at school—something that is won because of something else. And since it is comfortably certain that she will be won if the something else is achieved, readers can concentrate on the real substance of what they are reading—on the oddities of interspace travel, on the display of the main character's "know-how" or lack of it.

The point here would not be worth laboring if this one change stood alone, if it were only young love that was affected. This change, however, seems to be symptomatic of a shift of values much more sweeping. In a considerable part of the better written stories of today, the purely personal emotion, the purely personal occurrences not only carry a weight other than their own but a weight under which their own is dwarfed. Take for a first example "The Portable Phonograph." It is a story which, once read, is not easily forgotten. What is remembered, though, is not the person but the predicament presented. The beings caught in the predicament are—as the author made them, meant them to be—token figures only. The figures in "The View from the Balcony" are far more strongly individualized, and yet here too the strongest emphasis is laid not on any single human or on any human struggle but on the fetid and corrupting atmosphere which envelops the group. And the final fear-inducing paragraph leaves all

individuals belittled beneath the lowering future. Any reader can multiply examples, for the trend is general.⁴

It is not, of course, a trend without plenty of precedent in fiction; it is less all-embracing now than in, say, much of eighteenth-century writing, as witness *Rasselas* or Addison's famous bridge-crossers. And in any period and in any story worth a second reading, the character has always stood for something more than merely himself. It is degree, not kind, that is altered. Nonetheless, it has been a long time since the balance has tipped so far toward general significance and away from individual importance as it is tipping now.

"Why it is?" is a question capable of several obvious answers and probably of others which will be obvious to later times. Among the obvious now are, first, the actually lessened importance of the individual, his increased helplessness, in a civilization growing constantly more complex; and, second, the writer's quickened moral earnestness already spoken of, which prevents his assessing against the individual character the full responsibility for his acts.

How far such moral earnestness is for the ultimate good of writing, whether the swing of the pendulum will be away from it when a new generation of writers replaces the present one—these, again, are questions better left for 1990. What can be said in 1951 is that its existence is a large part of the reason why short stories are again a force in the shaping of readers' emotional attitudes and resultant conduct as they have not been until now since Kipling's hold was weakened. Change a single word and Andrew Fletcher's quoted dictum, "If a man

⁴"The Portable Phonograph" appears in *The Watchful Gods and Other Stories*; "The View from the Balcony" in *The Women on the Wall*.

were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation," remains at least half as true for twentieth-century America as for seventeenth-century Scotland.

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The New Scholasticism

KENNETH NEILL CAMERON¹

FOR the last twenty or more years, concomitant with the controversy over the new criticism, has raged that over the new scholasticism. With the publication of René Wellek and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature*, both controversies are joined. The new scholasticism attempts to provide a more extensive theoretical basis, philosophical and pedagogical, for the new criticism. It is now, perhaps, time for a survey and some stock-taking.

I

Although rumblings, especially from the "humanists," had gone on for many years prior to 1927, it was in that year that a controversy on scholarship and its methods was officially launched by E. E. Stoll's article, "Fallacies and Irrelevancies in the Scholarship of the Day," in *Studies in Philology*. Stoll attacked the use of "scientific" method in literary research and condemned studies of sources, influences, and identification as "little

relevant to the real understanding of the author." In his *Shakespeare Studies* of the same year he advanced the theory that literature is not a reflection of life. "Literature is of course, not life, neither history nor material for history, but a scroll whereon are traced and characterized the unfettered thoughts of writer and reader." In 1929 Stoll was followed by a more elaborate exposition in Norman Foerster's *The American Scholar*. Foerster agrees that scientific method is deplorable and extends the attack to include science in general, which he views as a force "hostile to the humanities." He selects for special chastisement the use of the science of psychology in literary interpretation. He agrees that sources and influences are of but incidental value and advances to the position of doubting the relevance of a linking of literature with society in any form. Literature must be studied essentially in and of itself. Scholars should apply their "vaunted industry to the search for those constants in literature and literary theory in which reside the standards that defy the varying provincialisms of the age of history."

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How is the scholar to recognize these "constants"? The answer is "taste." "The law of taste," wrote Paul Elmer More, and Foerster quotes with approval, "is the least changeable fact of human nature." In consequence of these re-evaluations in scholarship, the graduate school must be reoriented. The "German doctorate" must be abolished. In place of the study of literature in its historical development would come a shift toward "an humane comprehension of the work of the great writers." This is especially important because the tasks of the older scholarship are about exhausted: "The important tests are made, the necessary facts are accumulated."

In 1931 Edwin Greenlaw gave a comprehensive answer to Foerster and Stoll in *The Province of Literary History*. He proceeded on the assumption (and, it seems to me, correctly) that they were not attacking abuses of scholarship only but scholarship in its essence. Once literature is divorced from life, any deeply understanding investigation becomes impossible. "It would substitute the timeless laws of literature, whatever that term may mean, for the study of the masterpieces of the human spirit, springing from the subtle relations between genius and experience, not to be fully understood through intuition alone." It is not, as its proponents claim, an advance, but a retreat from genuine scholarship to scholasticism, a retreat to a method "as dry and blind as the pseudo-classic criticism of the eighteenth century." That abuses of scholarship exist is true, but to seize upon these to make generalizations is not legitimate. "Because the study of literary history may lead into bypaths, or the study of sources and parallels may lead to foolishness, or the product of the learned journals may be redolent with pedantry is no reason for a return to the

reign of wit and reason." It is a retreat not only in scholarship but in philosophy; for it is fundamentally a denial of the reality of the past and, hence, of the present. "The medieval ascetic ideal of withdrawal from a world that is very evil to a sanctuary of ancient learning may be very well for a few peculiar spirits; it will not save the world in its present crisis." Those who hold that literature does not reflect life are confusing "life and realism." Both Spenser and Shakespeare, for example, reflect the life of their age, not in simple, direct form, but in symbolic, creative form, revealing, in essence, its struggles and philosophies. To say that scholarship should not investigate these interconnections is not only to limit scholarship but to block the reader from a comprehensive understanding of literature. "To understand it, for Shakespeare's time or for another's, we need knowledge of the life and intellectual currents of the time, not merely study of the masterpiece *in vacuo*, or in comparison with a universal definition, or as illustration of the immutable laws of literature." The argument that all has now been done is the expression of an ignorance of the nature of scholarly investigation. "There is no such thing as the final treatment of a period, of a national history, or of the biography of a great man of letters and the interpretation of his work." The scholar is not only researcher; he is also critic. The opponents of scholarship would like to force a dichotomy so that they may emerge as the Critics and the scholar be relegated to the gathering of dry sticks. Rejecting these arguments of his opponents, Greenlaw naturally rejects also their proposed "reforms" in graduate study, "the amazing theory . . . that the literature studied in the graduate school shall to all intents and purposes be limited to a restrictive list . . . a

new book of the month club to make a scholar's choices for him."

These arguments of Greenlaw's had been buttressed in two articles by Howard Mumford Jones in the *Sewanee Review* (1930-31). Jones argued that only through scholarly investigation does a student develop a sense of the reality of the past or acquire a basis for comparative judgment. In 1933 and 1934 two more articles appeared, one by John Livingston Lowes (in *PMLA*—his presidential address to the Modern Language Association) and another by Jones (in the *English Journal*), both emphasizing the complementary nature of scholarship and criticism, Jones pointing out that many great scholars had also been critics and men of letters, Lowes presenting the theoretical concept that "the ultimate end of research is criticism." The essence of scholarship, he declared—doubtless with the strictures of Stoll and Foerster in mind—is "applying the methods of science to the interpretation of an art." "Humane scholarship, in a word, moves and must move within two worlds at once—the world of scientific method and the world, in whatever degree, of creative art." The scholar needs both analytic method and appreciative insight (a position later further propounded in England by J. A. K. Thomson).

In 1940 the new scholasticism advanced again to the attack, this time in the form of a symposium on "Literature and the Professors" participated in by the leading exponents of the new criticism, later published in the *Kenyon Review* and the *Southern Review*. We are once more presented with the arguments of Stoll and Foerster, that the work of scholarship is now completed (Ransom), that the evil lies in the relating of literature to society, the use of scientific method, the application of psychology to liter-

ature (Brooks and Tate). "Historicism, psychologism, scientism," writes Tate, "in general the confident application of the scientific vocabularies to the spiritual realm, has created a spiritual disorder . . . a dilemma." The social sciences are making for the emergence of a "slave state," and "the quicker literature is divorced from them the better." (The "slave state" is not defined but appears to be an enlarged New Deal.) Scholars, Ransom informs us, are not "generally familiar with the conception of what criticism is." The professor, writes Brooks, has "no knowledge of the inner structure of a poem or a drama." The argument, inherent in Foerster, of the division into scholar and critic has now come to maturity, but in its development it has taken on a special meaning. What Ransom and Brooks mean essentially is that the scholar is unfamiliar with or unsympathetic toward the dicta of the "new" criticism. (The scholar, and others, had, for instance, come to regard the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" as a poem springing deeply from life, symbolically imaging an important truth, and this they might balk at exchanging for the clever scaffolding of formalistic ironies which the author of *The Well Wrought Urn* presents in its place.)

II

The authors of *Theory of Literature* acknowledge their debt to Foerster in the Preface and had previously collaborated with him in *Literary Scholarship: Its Aims and Methods* (1941); they express their admiration for the New Critics on whose programs at Kenyon College they had previously appeared. These ideological kinships have not generally been noted by the reviewers, who seem to have considered the *Theory* as a handbook rather than a thesis book. The mistake

has doubtless arisen, in part, from the larger scope of the *Theory of Literature* (a scope which the authors find to be without "close parallel," although a similarity with Aristotle is noted) and, in part, also, from the authors' cautious shading of qualifications and their practice of condemning or recommending not by blame or praise but by selection and emphasis (a method perhaps confusing to the nonacademic mind).

The main line of attack—against science, the use of scientific method, the linking of literature with life or society; the intrusion of scholarship into criticism; the use of psychological analysis—is continued but is now bolstered by a rejection of biography, of bibliography, of the influence of "ideas," and of the relating of literature to the other arts. Not that these subjects are always unequivocally repudiated; the authors are seldom unequivocal. They are simply relegated to such peripheral roles as to, in fact, deprive them of significance. They are mainly lumped together as "extrinsic" techniques in contrast to "intrinsic" (formalistic) techniques which are then elevated to pre-eminent status.

The use of "scientific methods" constitutes "an invasion into literary study"; its "promoters" have either "confessed failure" or "comforted themselves with delusions" of "future successes" (p. 4). Authors, a special species, defy psychological analysis (pp. 77 ff.). "Scholarship"—i.e., the "old" not the "new" scholarship—"seems" to "exclude criticism" (p. 49). "Environmental factors" are all very well, but the "actual problems" of the critic only begin "when we evaluate, compare, and isolate the individual factors which are supposed to determine the work of art" (p. 65). Biography may "explain" "allusions" or "even words" in an author's text, but "it seems

dangerous to ascribe to it any real critical importance" (pp. 73-74). The bibliographical school (of Greg, Pollard, etc.) is eliminated by throwing doubts on the validity of its methods without discussing these methods or analyzing its achievements (p. 52). The relation of literature to art is purely formalistic (Shakespeare is "Baroque," etc. [pp. 132-35]). While it is legitimate to apply philosophical standards to literary values—for the authors constantly so apply them—it is not legitimate or, at least, profitable to study the influence of philosophy upon writers. The fact that Shelley's philosophical beliefs permeated his poetry is irrelevant to a judgment of him as a poet (p. 112). Psychology has some value in "illuminating the creative process," but its "critical relevance" is "surely overrated" (p. 86). The "sociological approach to literature" is essentially irrelevant (p. 89). "To say that literature mirrors or reflects life is even more ambiguous" (p. 90). Literature, furthermore, is restricted to purely creative forms. Hume and Gibbon are cast forth. "Hume cannot be judged except as a philosopher, Gibbon except as a historian" (p. 10). The techniques of scholarly inquiry are slighted not by the indelicacies of argumentation but by the selection of minor cruxes (the indecision on the authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*; the improbabilities of some of Dover Wilson's restorations of Shakespearean text) and the omission of its important contributions. English scholarship is dismissed as a conglomerate of "mere antiquarianism" and "impressionistic essays" (p. 285). The real importance of Dover Wilson's new Cambridge Shakespeare is not discussed; no analysis is made of—to take a representative sample—De Selincourt's *Prelude*, Herford and Simpson's *Ben Jonson*, Basil Willey's

Seventeenth Century Background, Polard's *Shakespeare and the Pirates*. Two of E. K. Chambers' articles are noted, but his major works are omitted (perhaps as "antiquarian"). Though some of the techniques of scholarship are listed (following Morize), one looks in vain for appreciative treatment. The over-all impression conveyed is that of scholarly dryness and futility.

What then is left for scholarship? Part IV, "Intrinsic Study," supplies the answer. The scholar is to turn to formalist analysis and comparison along the lines of the New Critics and their Russian counterparts, the Formalists of the 1920's. He is to investigate—to quote from the chapter headings—"euphony, rhythm and meter; style and stylistics; image, metaphor, symbol, myth." In the novel and drama he is to eschew content and concentrate on "modes" and structure. He may investigate "literary genres," provided that he is careful to compare them only with each other. Comparative literature is to become an international mart of genres. If he essays "literary history," he must see his task as tracing literary evolution purely in its own terms, divorced from social or intellectual change, "the tracing of changes from one system of norms to another." One difficulty with this approach is that it fails to explain the reason for literary development. "Why this change of convention has come about at a particular moment is a historical problem insoluble in general terms" (p. 278). The home for this new purism is America. The scholarship of Europe is effete, and "leadership has now passed to the United States," where, fortunately, "there is a native, independent critical movement beginning to make itself academically felt" and where, too, "it has been possible to assemble European scholars of methodo-

logical and speculative concerns as well as learning" (p. 288).

In critical theory the authors reject More and Foerster's immutable "taste" (as perhaps unduly naïve) and set up an elaborate structure of "norms" in five levels—"stratified norms"—as touchstones (pp. 151-58). These norms occupy an ambiguous position between metaphysical absolutism and "intersubjective" projection, but in the last analysis they seem to dissolve back into "taste" and imply a relativistic subjectivism which has the seeds of that solipsism within it that the authors strive so mercurially to avoid (which is all the more difficult, since they are dubious of the existence of objective reality, e.g., p. 25). This last, in appearances, is an effort to go beyond the "new criticism" into philosophy—and some of it apparently derives from the Prague Linguistic Circle—but its essential agreement with that criticism will become apparent from a comparison with, let us say, the final chapters of *The Well Wrought Urn*.

In their conclusion, the authors, following the pattern of Foerster, consider the application of their views to graduate study and arrive at similar conclusions. (The chapter is, in fact, an elaboration of propositions presented by Foerster in *Literary Scholarship*.) The emphasis is to be shifted from the total study of a literature to comparative genre courses and the "critical" treatment of selected masterpieces, with an emphasis upon "close reading and exegesis." The mortal scholar is still to be allowed a mode of existence in this Empyrean of Critical Hierophants, but he must gracefully recognize that his functions are menial and his days numbered.

III

It is clear even from the preceding brief sketch that a new theory of litera-

ture has grown up in this country in the past quarter of a century. This theory is well defined and inclusive, reaching out to embrace nature and method in scholarship, literary criticism, literary history, and education. It is, however, in spite of interesting suggestions here and there, essentially a sterile theory, for the premise upon which it rests, as Greenlaw clearly perceived, is that of divorcing literature from life and thought. Literature is first to be narrowed by the rejection of all prose not dealing specifically with belles-lettres, and what is then left is to be considered formalistically. (An example of the method may be seen in a recent book on *King Lear* in which *Lear* is considered not as a reflection of life or even as a play but as an exercise in image patterns; which is a little like an examination of style and structure in *Candide* without noting that it is a satire.) All this follows from the initial premise, for if literature is not an expression of life it does not embody truth about life; literature is inevitably reduced to a manipulation of techniques which are to be evaluated in terms of complexity. It is the function of the critic to analyze these techniques; it is the function of the scholar to compare them; it is the function of the teacher to teach them. In view of this autopsic approach one can hardly be surprised to find that the authors of *Theory of Literature*, for instance, seldom express a feeling for literature warmer than a cautious pleasure in the "metonymy" of a hymn.

The theory, however, is not purely formalistic. It is permitted to search in literature for "constants" or "norms" which inhabit the "spiritual realm." Literature, that is to say, can be meaningfully analyzed in terms of metaphysics (though not in those of psychology, sociology, etc.). The favored "exegetical"

method will presumably be directed largely to the unveiling of these entities.

This formalistic and metaphysical approach inevitably drives its proponents into oversimplification in critical theory. They seem to feel that if they could but sufficiently distil literature they would end up with a pure essence the analysis of which would then be the supreme function of criticism. But literature has life only through its interconnections, and the process of critical judgment, even the initial act of response, is not simple but complex, a process which must take place within a frame of reference whether the reader is aware of it or not. Much though one may agree, for instance, that the biographical approach has been overdone in recent times, nevertheless the fact remains that such biographies as Harper's *Wordsworth* or White's *Shelley* give new insights into the poets as men which carry over, partly unconsciously, into the comprehension of the poetry in both content and style. And while a mechanically sociological approach is undeniably barren, such sensitive studies as Greenlaw's on the social background of Spenser or Miss Campbell's of Shakespeare or Bronowski's and Schorer's of Blake change the perspective within which we view these writers and others of their age. These things affect our judgment not peripherally but vitally. The purely formalistic must, by its nature, be the most superficial of the levels of understanding in literature; analysis of form, admittedly a major function of the critic, to be meaningful must take place within the perspective of a judgment, embracing both content and background.

The way forward for scholarship surely does not lie in its merging into scholasticism but in a further development along the lines suggested by Greenlaw. The historical method must not be re-

jected but enriched. In the examination of a writer or period the scholar must see his task as that of interpretation based on comprehensive research. He must investigate the economic, political, and social background of a period, its ideological currents, its literary conventions, its relation to preceding and succeeding periods, utilizing whatever weapons science, social, bibliographical, or psychological, has provided for him. He must familiarize himself with the lives of the authors and attempt to understand their psychological as well as intellectual development. And, finally, he must investigate and explicate the transmutation of this life-material, social and personal, into creative and symbolic form. His function is not only investigative but aesthetic. He must examine and explain the work of literature in its content, form, style, and meaning, recognizing that the ultimate aim of research is interpretation, but recognizing also that interpretation without research—embodied in his own work or that of others—is always superficial and often erroneous. He must be both widely read and a specialist, for the detailed investigation of one period lends a new reality to all periods which cannot otherwise be gained. The past illuminates not only itself but the present; and, conversely, it must not be forgotten, especially today, that a grasp of the present illuminates the past. A "fugitive and cloistered virtue" is not likely to give depth to literary comprehension. A scholar unaware of and not participant in the issues of the present is not likely to have any grasp of the issues of the past. To approach Dante purely from

a metaphysical point of view is to miss many of the richer meanings of the *Inferno*, a work springing from an immersion in social conflict. A scholar with no grasp of the issues facing democracy today is likely to have but a shallow understanding of Milton, Shelley, or Emerson. In an atomic age the ivory towers have crumbled beyond repair, and there is little point in trying to rebuild them of concrete. The scholar, like the poet, must become a man talking to men. He must enlarge his audience beyond that of his fellow-scholars into that of the general intellectual reading public. And this can be done only by the significant treatment of significant subjects. He must utilize the past to chart directions in the present. But he must apply his skills to the present also. He must be as familiar with Joyce or Dylan Thomas as with Chaucer or Marvell. And each he must see in the perspective of his age and the vaster perspectives of literary history.

The new scholasticism will not enlarge this range but narrow it. It will not give the scholar more comprehension of his role in society but less, engulfing scholarship in a slough of metaphysical absolutes or relegating it to formalistic dissection. It will not give the graduate student more but less perspective. Genre courses and a "higher" textual criticism, tempting though they may at first seem as escapes from acquiring the rigorous disciplines of scholarship, can, unless they are subordinated to a program devoted to the examination of a total literature in its historical unfolding and its interrelations with other literatures, lead nowhere but to an academic blind alley.

Some New Poems from A. E. Housman's *Notebooks*¹

TOM BURNS HABER²

DURING his poetic lifetime—from ca. 1890 to 1925—A. E. Housman year by year packed the fruits of his inspiration into four Notebooks, from which he drew the substance of *A Shropshire Lad* in 1896 and *Last Poems* in 1922. After the death of the poet in 1936, his brother Laurence made two further assays of the unpublished material in the Notebooks and brought out two other portions, which now comprise the latter sections in the Holt edition of *Collected Poems*.

The Notebooks themselves—regrouped in seven sections, with much rearrangement and addition of new material—Laurence Housman in 1939 sold to an American philanthropist; and they have been accessible to scholars in this country since 1940.

There were 165 loose folio-size sheets in the collection when it was received here. All but a few of these consisted of new leaves, on which had been securely pasted the remains of the old Notebook pages. The collection presented then—as it still does—a curiously jumbled appearance; the poet's order of numbering had been completely overturned, and the papers themselves varied in size from intact Notebook pages to scraps not much wider than a thumbnail.

It was not until 1945 that it was dis-

covered that the miscellany was richer by considerably more than met the eye, that many—perhaps most—of the manuscript pieces, great and small, contained writing on *both* sides. There was a possibility that there might be some new Housman here, and it was possible that some of it might rank with his best.

In the general overhauling to which the seven notebooks were subjected, all the pieces were removed from their mounting sheets, cleaned, and then hinge-mounted in the same order as when received; with the result that there now lay open to the scrutiny of one willing to trade his eyesight for new Housmaniana over one hundred pieces of manuscript whose existence had been known to few—if any—persons besides the poet's brother when the Notebooks passed out of the keeping of the Housman family.

A few of these verso pages read fairly easily, but the majority are difficult. Many were written in pencil, which erasure and normal fading have nearly obliterated—not to complain of all-too-frequent cancellation in the form of heavy up-and-down pen strokes. But a familiarity with the poet's hand and a modicum of persistence—under agreement I used no eye aids other than a simple reading lens—brought up more than enough buried treasure to pay the cost of the expedition. Here are a few specimens of the best:

¹ The right to reprint any part of this article is strictly reserved.

² Ohio State University.

When Adam first the apple ate
 He had a friend to keep him straight;
 God to a wife: 'twas hopeless odds.
 Friends are a deal more help than gods.

—From page 192 of Notebook A. Autumn, 1894.
 Pencil, line-canceled.

How many milestones more to pass
 Before the turning road
 Shall bring me to my roof of grass
 And steeple-gloomed abode?

—From page 163 of Notebook A. Autumn, 1893.
 Pencil, un erased.

Streams of the forsaken west,
 Keep the hearts that I love best;
 Keep your treasure, land and sea,
 Shropshire breeds the men for me.
 Golden lads and good to trust
 Plant their heels in Shropshire dust;
 On the western highways go
 Lovely lads and good to know.
 Teme and Corve and Severn shore,
 Countries where I come no more,
 Under starlight now they stream
 Broad along the lands of dream;
 Only morning shows no more
 Corve nor Teme nor Severn shore.

—From page 42 of Notebook B. June, 1895.
 Pencil, partly erased.

A Defense of Freshmen

RUTH DAVIES¹

ARE you a reader of freshman themes? Do you find yourself nervous, run-down, and tired? Do you see red-pencil marks before your eyes, and are you haunted at night by dangling participles, split infinitives, disagreement between subject and verb, and comma splices? Do the freshmen and their papers cause you palpitations and give you a pain? Have you, in

¹ Ohio Wesleyan University.

fact, arrived at such a state that even your best friend can't tell you—what to do? Then you need to take stock of yourself and your job, to find the root of the trouble; for your case is not hopeless!

I too once had a dim view of freshmen in general and their themes in particular. I was convinced that they knew little, wanted to know less—in short, were allergic to education in any form. But I

took stock, and at last I understood that the freshmen are more to be pitied than censured. My discoveries about some of the things frequently wrong with the teaching of freshman English and what to do about them are herewith presented.

The first and in some ways most insidious mistake in teaching freshman English is the assumption that the right textbook will solve all or even most problems. I was for a period a member of an English staff determined to find the "right" book. Year after year they investigated the burdensome volumes the publishers showered upon us and at frequent intervals made new adoptions (each worse than the last, it seemed to me), always secure in the faith that this time they had found the key to the door of the freshman mind. Most of the choices no doubt furnished the publishers income and the editors and writers professional prestige, giving the latter the right to wear the initiated look at MLA meetings; but, as for the freshmen, they were left untouched. They dutifully bought and carried about whatever was the choice of the moment and at the semester's end sold the books as quickly as possible, their minds still virginal, their belief that English grammar is a vortex of darkness still intact. Nor did I blame them. I have seen few texts for freshmen English which I could endure to read. The intricate explanations, the endless procession of coily incorrect sentences to be corrected, the maze of code numbers marching toward infinity, the silly paragraphs wrested out of context, the details, the diagrams, the drudgery—it would take a strong appetite or a professional student in search of a Ph.D. to relish such fare.

And, worst of all, sometimes my well-meaning colleagues, driven by desperate zeal and with a new glint of resolution in the eye, would throw in a workbook for

good measure. Miserable decision! It has been my observation that some people play anagrams, some work crossword puzzles, some compose limericks or acrostics, some copy illustrations from ancient manuscripts, and a few occupy themselves with workbooks related to grammar; but none of these pursuits has any relation to acquiring facility in the actual use of language.

Simply stated, the textbook doesn't matter. No textbook will "work," and, while some are better than others (simpler, shorter, lighter, with better print), no teacher can charm the freshmen into the green fields of language skill until he has admitted that no book will do the job for him. In the irresistible picture of a student at one end of the log and Mark Hopkins at the other, the textbook is conspicuously absent.

Another common weakness in teaching freshman English is the overemphasis upon *how* to write, that is, the effort to set and maintain nebulous standards that have little relation to speech, either written or spoken. The complaint of Mr. Brooks Baker in the April, 1949, issue of *College English*,

A gibbering idiot I
A thing of dots and dashes . . .

is all too familiar. But we theme readers are largely the cause of our own misery. If we did not worry so much about the dots and dashes, we might have more diverting material to read between them. Do not misunderstand me. I am a devoted admirer of the semicolon; I abhor the use of the plural following most of the indefinite pronouns; and I have passionate convictions regarding form and frequency in footnote use. But observation long ago convinced me that the semicolon is not standardized as to usage or necessarily admired by writers presented to the freshmen as models; respect for the

singularity of the indefinite pronouns is virtually nonexistent except within the shelter of the grammar books themselves; and many of my fellow-workers feel equally as passionate about a different set of values for footnotes. Moreover, it is not footnotes but football which constitutes the passion of my students, and I must meet them in their own arena, whether I like it or not.

Yes, many teachers of freshman English waste much of their energy trying to enforce rules and standards universally ignored, and by no others more frequently than by successful and effective writers. Thank goodness, I have given up on the subjunctive and the difference between *shall* and *will*; and yet the shady garments of the grammarian hang about me still in my inability to accept fragments instead of sentences. But I have been forced to admit the difficulty of finding anything for freshmen to read in which fragments do not appear, with heads proud and uplifted! In fact, it is difficult to find anything in print that does not violate many of the rules in the handbook. In his article, "Linguistics and Pedagogy: The Need for Reconciliation," to which I refer my readers, Mr. Thomas Pyles gives an excellent exposition of my point. As he says, too many of us teachers seem to believe in "an English language that never was on sea or land, a language which those responsible for the glories of English literature *ought* to have written but which, unfortunately for the best-laid plans of the prescriptive professors, they seldom bothered to write."²

The result of all this is that, while we are engrossed with the scrawny skin and brittle bones of composition, the flesh and blood and heart of the matter are al-

most forgotten. In our overemphasis upon *how* to write we do not adequately provide *what* to write. That is the worst mistake of all. Too many times freshmen are expected to write out of a vacuum. Often when I face a class of beginning students, their eyes haunted by tales they have heard of English class, I feel that they are waiting for me to point a lean finger and demand that they *WRITE*! But write what? they wonder, as indeed they may. I, for one, have no intention of reading any more themes on "Why I Came to College," "My Home Town," "My Best Vacation," or any of the other standard, pallid ghosts. And when I consult the lists of theme topics, as inevitable as the handbook itself, I am reminded of the man who started from nowhere, went nowhere, had nowhere to go, and yet was expected to arrive. These topics would appeal only to museum-piece personalities. But college students are real people, young, energetic; reasonably willing to learn but distrustful of abstractions; given to daydreaming; full of the prejudices with which their thoughtless parents have loaded them and almost completely inexperienced in the practice of thinking. They have read little but the comics and popular magazines, heard little but radio noises and the chatter of their friends, experienced little that could give them understanding. Yes, they may well ask, "Write—what?"

If, then, I am to extract from those students either discussion or themes having vitality, validity, or variety, I must provide them with something to think about, which they are willing and able to think about. Good writing and good talk come from minds alert, interested, richly stored. Improvement can come only as one substitutes ideas for routines. I have known a number of neat young coeds who wrote with almost complete accu-

² Thomas Pyles, "Linguistics and Pedagogy: The Need for Reconciliation," *College English*, April, 1949, p. 395.

racy and with equally complete vacuity, no ideas having percolated behind their pretty foreheads. But even they are not necessarily hopeless. They *can* think if they are persuaded and lured to do so. How shall one achieve this aim? Following are a number of suggestions for procedures and source material I have found effective. I pass them on to those who are wrestling with "dots and dashes" and the other troublesome impedimenta of the "freshman theme reader."

The first inducement to good composition is to allow students to write on things in which they are interested. This frequently means romance and, oddly enough, often means religion. But there is no reason to act as if romance and religion are taboo. The first, at least, is the topic most often discussed in bull sessions, and the instructor might as well get the benefit of the enthusiasm thus engendered. Sports and fashions are other favorite subjects. Although I have a positive distaste for sports in any form, I would rather read a good paper on basketball than an anemic or laborious one on "The Difficulties of Setting a Good Example," "How To Press a Suit," or "The Case for Vertical Unions." These are three of the charming topics to be found in a text widely in use this year. Now I ask you, could *you* lose yourself in a discussion of "The Case for Vertical Unions"? The student who has written on football or flying or designing clothes or why he believes in early marriages is more willing to spend time on that onerous task, the correction and even rewriting of his faulty paper, than one who has sweated over a topic about which he knows he knows nothing and the importance of which he cannot see.

"But," you say, "how do you justify allowing the student to write about material with which he is already familiar, the stuff of his everyday conversation?

That will not add to his information or expand his horizons." True enough. My point is that if the discipline of freshman English is to be more than a superficial covering to be sloughed off as soon as the final examination is over, it is necessary to start where the student is, to have something upon which to work, to enlist his interest, to mold unobtrusively his thought and habit patterns. Language skill is largely a matter of observation and practice, neither one a by-product of forcing.

On the other hand, it is right that the student get information and expanded horizons from his English course. This admission leads to my second recommendation—that the instructor try to bridge the gap from the known to the unknown by making the student feel the close relation between his work in composition and his other college courses. It would be a great boon to education if the teacher of English could assume that his colleagues in all departments emphasized the importance of language in their various courses and required from students even a minimum of language skills. But he cannot make that assumption. He must reach out toward the other subjects, since they are seldom made to embrace his. There is, for instance, no reason why the freshman wanting to study political science and avid for a diplomatic career may not be permitted to select topics from that area, be encouraged to learn new things about his chosen field, be persuaded that success in diplomacy depends largely upon mastery of words. The young scientist and even the placid home-economics major may be shown that language is an indispensable tool. Some of the best themes I have read have followed the student's discovery that English is not an isolated unit of study, occurring only at two o'clock Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but rather the

basis of all he studies, learns, communicates, indeed of all he *is*. Through the English course the way may often be pointed toward hitherto unsuspected interests. The important thing is that language be revealed not as an end but as a means toward many ends, infinite in potentials and productive of many satisfactions.

Another expedient valuable in stimulating freshman writing is the so-called "literary magazine" languishing on almost every college campus. In most cases, the magazine, in a condition of effete aestheticism, has no appeal to the majority of the students. Such a publication no doubt has a justifiable function, but there should be a magazine offering opportunity for many other students in addition to the ivory-tower group to see their best efforts in print. There is no better incentive to clear thinking and creative composition than the hope that one's essay or story or poem may be accepted for publication. Likewise, there is no better medium for the development of critical perceptions than the chance to see one's work, or even the outpourings of a classmate, in the cold objectivity of print. Not only is it impossible for a student to write out of a vacuum but it is also unreasonable for him to write into a vacuum. Furthermore, the entire class benefits from the exercise of critical judgment with regard to which manuscripts are worthy of being published. Also, revision and improvement are much less obnoxious if there is a discernible goal, no matter how seldom attained. Even a modest publication is better than none. And frequently magazines started unpretentiously come to hold a place of respect and influence on the campus. This condition can exist, of course, only when serious students are convinced by the evidence of the magazine itself that in unprejudiced competition there is a chance

for the best of their work to achieve the dignity of print. The students *need* a magazine, just as much as the college magazine needs student subscribers and contributors.

Best of all the methods I have discovered to make theme-writing vital is the establishment of a carefully planned program linking the writings of lecturers who come to the campus with class work, both discussion and theme-writing. Each year our departments of language and literature present, at about monthly intervals, a series of lectures by six or eight well-known personalities. They may be poets, novelists, critics, news analysts, war correspondents, actors, journalists. The one requirement is that they shall have written or shall interpret effectively something we are justified in asking students to read. Their coming is carefully prepared for. Instead of being assigned an abstract essay apropos of nothing, the students are set to work on an article, a poem, or a story by a man they will see and hear in a week or two. Further readings from his work are used in the classroom, with explanations about who he is, why he knows about his subject, why he is worth reading and listening to. By the time the speaker arrives on the campus, there has been considerable discussion of the man and his work. Anticipation and curiosity have been aroused, and the student attends the lecture feeling that he is to listen to a person of consequence with whom he is already familiar and about whose work and ideas he has already begun to form opinions. The lecture gives a good opportunity for note-taking, or else a poor one; results for classroom study are valuable in either case. After the lecture the student can add to what he was already beginning to think about the man and his ideas the impressions produced and the ideas conveyed by the speech itself, and by this time he has

something to write about, something he really wants to say. Further class discussion may follow, but usually best theme results are obtained while the speaker's personality is fresh in the hearer's mind and before the material of the lecture has been hashed over in too many bull sessions—while the heat of battle is still on. The best freshman writing I have ever read has come from such a process as this. Having at one point assumed it was impossible really to interest students in anything likely to occur in a classroom, I have been astonished and delighted by results. Here is the motivation educators are always talking about, and, *mirabile dictu*, it works.

To be concrete: A long-time stand-by in the anthologies of readings for freshmen is the excellent article by Robert M. Hutchins called "Gate Receipts and Glory." This article is a favorite of mine because (1) I agree with its argument and (2) it is well written—carefully organized, vigorous, pertinently illustrated—which is more than can be said for most articles in the anthologies. Consequently, I always asked the freshmen to read it, but with little other appreciable result than that my blood pressure was certain to skyrocket. The assertions it inspired in class and on paper were trite, sloppy, illogical, adolescent, emotional, worthless. They went in this general direction: Football is the great American sport. Anybody who doesn't like football is a poor citizen. . . . What does he think we come to college for, anyway? . . . If he's so hard on football it must be he isn't a he-man. . . . Everybody knows all the best schools pay their athletes. And why not? Those guys give all they've got to dear old *alma mater*. . . . All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. . . . We come to college to learn how to get along with people and be good sports. . . . And so *ad nauseam*.

But Robert Hutchins in the flesh! That was a different matter. Not to be overlooked, in preparation, were the handsome pictures on magazine covers, the descriptions of the "youngest college president, who looks like a Greek god," the human-interest stories about the Great Books' clubs. And a variety of articles, football scarcely mentioned. The lecture itself: the well-modulated voice, the still-handsome profile, the assured manner, the flawless organization, ideas arresting and sane, sincerity beyond question—the cultured man who demanded respect. The girls could thrill at the impeccable tailoring, the boys see for themselves a "he-man." Now the ideas came to life, ideas about, of all things, the relation between morality and education. Everyone had something to think about, to talk about: one heard snatches of it in the corridors, at the dormitory breakfast table, at the students' hang-out. And the themes that came after? They were *worth* reading!

Two hours with Robert Frost in person do more for poetry than two months of vague "study." Jesse Stuart filled the freshmen with something akin to fervor for writing (for about two weeks), and Paul Engle made both poetry and criticism exciting. Even without histrionics William Shirer carried us along for a lively interval; Eva LeGallienne inspired unheard-of interest in the drama; Edward Weeks provided an excuse for every freshman's reading two issues of the *Atlantic*, and a few students even subscribed for the magazine. Many others have served our purpose fully as well. The supply is large, and frequent repetitions are not amiss, since the college generation lasts only four years.

Some colleges do not, of course, have the machinery for providing such a series, but it is a rare college which does not bring to its campus a number of vital

speakers to whose lectures such a program may be harnessed. They may be political figures, speakers at chapel or convocation, travelers, explorers, even musicians or dancers. I cannot imagine a finer stimulus for writing than Martha Graham's poignant and lovely interpretation of Emily Dickinson, "Letter to the World." Radio programs may also be used effectively, and they are economical of the time of both teacher and students. The possibilities in this field are striking and deserve more attention than I shall give them here; indeed, if one were to put to serious use the best that radio has to offer, he would encounter an embarrassment of riches.

Another treasure store upon which to draw for discussion and theme topics is one which requires no psychological setting, no cajolery, which is apparently without limit, inexpensive, and, to the students, irresistible—the movies. It is no longer intelligent or necessary to assume that everything on the screen, even everything from Hollywood, is trash. There is a constant flow of beautiful and artistic pictures, many of them dealing with material more memorably presented by this medium than any other. Some of the recent excellent documentary pictures speak for themselves, but even more attractive to students, and harder for most of them to see unless the college provides them, are the foreign films whose quality is beyond debate. Many of these films are available to educational institutions at a reasonable fee; and by showing several of them during the year the college can supply the students with an informative and cultural experience at the same time entertaining. From the long-famous *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* to the recent *Shoe Shine* and *Symphonie Pastorale*, the achievements of many foreign films are impressive and deserving of more consideration than they have re-

ceived in this country. Russian and Italian films have proved especially provocative for classroom discussion and writing. A number of British and French films are psychologically subtle and show skill in the presentation of universal problems that beset people everywhere. Such was the beautifully modulated film *Quartet* made from four stories by Somerset Maugham. Even though Marlene Dietrich's picture *The Blue Angel* was twenty years old when we showed it on our campus last year, the students went eagerly to see it and came away with a number of good bull-session questions, which meant something to bring to the classroom as well.

Often quite as valuable are the best among older American pictures. It is hard to remember that our students have not seen some of the "great" pictures of earlier years—*David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Les Misérables*, *Anna Karenina*, *Anna Christie*, *The Long Voyage Home*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Winter-set*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Henry VIII*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The list is long and the quality high. These pictures are as delightful now as when they were produced. In addition to their value in furnishing discussion and theme material, their usefulness to stimulate the reading of the "classics" is obvious.

But it is not necessary to turn either to foreign or to the best among older films, for there are a number of good current movies in almost every community during the course of a year. Since the majority of the students see these pictures (as well as a number of second-rate films), they are ready material, requiring only a modicum of effort on the instructor's part to make use of them when they become available. Within the last two years such films as the following—to mention

only a few—have been outstanding: *The Yearling*, *Miracle on 34th St.*, *The House on 92nd St.*, *Boomerang*, *Crossfire*, *Gentlemen's Agreement*, *The Snake Pit*, *Louisiana Story*, *Home of the Brave*, *Lost Boundaries*, *A Letter to Three Wives*, *All My Sons*, *Great Expectations*, *Red Shoes*, *The Time of Your Life*, *Madame Bovary*, *Joan of Arc*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and, of course, *Henry V* and *Hamlet*.

A third easily accessible source which provides students with good material for writing is current magazines. I have not forgotten how much easier was the presentation of the *Iliad* the year *Esquire* presented a feature on Helen of Troy, complete with a picture of Maureen O'Hara thinly disguised as the "face that launched a thousand ships." For best results it is wise not to insist on being always what the students call "highbrow." While an occasional article in the *Atlantic* or *Harper's* is splendid grist for the freshman's mill, it does no harm to make use of the best—often very good—offered by the magazines which, as one freshman expressed it, "real people read." She referred, of course, to *Life*, *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reader's Digest*; but the list need not end there. To find the most stimulating material and incorporate it in the assignment plan while the particular magazine is still on the newsstands, thus having the appeal of immediacy, admittedly requires alertness and ingenuity on the part of the instructor; but the instructor who lacks alertness and ingenuity deserves to be bored in his teaching of freshman English, and I am not concerned with him here.

The bounteous opportunities of this never ending stream of material should be obvious to him who has eyes to see. I illustrate only briefly. In my opinion the article having greatest pertinence to students last year was that moving treat-

ment of the discriminatory techniques of college fraternities, written by Alfred S. Romer and printed in the *Atlantic* for June, 1949. In the March issue of the same magazine, Donald C. Peattie's "The Sugar Maple" was a real gem. Following are a few articles chosen at random from the large number having possibilities of usefulness during the past semester: the *Saturday Evening Post*, April 16: "How I Was Duped by a Communist," by Dorothy Thompson, and "What about Federal Aid for Schools," by Henry and Katharine Pringle; the *Rotarian*, May: "Leadership through Fellowship," by John Foster Dulles; *Nature Magazine*, February: "Odd Experiences with Animals," by J. Alden Loring, and "Notes on a Happy Hobby," by P. T. Doudlinger; *Ladies' Home Journal*, January: "People Are People the World Over," by J. G. Morris, "Do You Know Your Children?" by Barbara Benson, and "Let's Be Practical about Sex Education," by Leslie B. Hohman; *Harper's*, March: "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" by Norman Lewis, "Fulton Lewis, Jr.: Man of Distinction," by H. N. Oliphant, and "How To Keep Away from the Dentist," by Herbert Yahraes. The quality of the editorials in *Life* has of recent months been impressive; and both *Life* and *Time* offer frequent features invaluable for class use.

Finally, akin to this but even more important, is the "lift" to be derived from having the students read significant books. "But," you say again, "there isn't time for everything in one year's work!" True; but any method which presumes to improve thinking and writing without recourse to reading is like the house built upon the sand. Since the student almost always writes in proportion to his experience and skill in reading, it should be assumed that if he is to write better he must read more. If there is no

time to include reading with the other machinery of freshman English, throw some of the junk overboard but keep the books. Better that each freshman read one *Anna Karenina*, one *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*, even one *Green Mansions*, *Lord Jim*, or *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, or *Pilgrim's Way* or *Wind, Sand, and Stars* than that he fill in five hundred sheets of workbook. One seldom learns by doing until one has learned by observing, by experience vicarious if not actual.

Some plans for freshman English attempt to cut in on the spoils by including reading in the second semester program. That is better than none, but what is good for tomorrow is certainly good for today. If good reading habits are not established during college years, they are not likely to be developed later, and nothing can be gained by postponing the process. Most American children are subjected to a reading diet fit only for morons, and the college instructor has a solemn obligation to see that his charges do not remain mentally rachitic. The wise instructor will try to steer the choice of books in order both to appeal to and to expand the student's taste. And no reading should be considered finished until the freshman has discussed his book, pref-

erably in oral conference, with the teacher or a mature student. If this takes the instructor's time, it also pays dividends in the increased vitality and spontaneity of the student's work—to say nothing of the dividends for the student. I can never forget the sharp stab of delight that came from some of the books to which I was introduced in college. For every freshman I covet that joy as a convincing antidote to the arid plains of grammar and as a foundation for later reading habits.

It is not the assumption of the writer that the seven suggestions proposed herewith will serve as a Seven-Storey Mountain to lead to an Earthly Paradise, but the evidence of experience has proved that they introduce variety, good humor, and a sense of discovery to what may otherwise be deadly routine and frequent frustration. They have convinced me that freshmen are fun and that teaching freshman English can be a game full of adventure and satisfaction for both teacher and students rather than a grim competition played off according to the principle of the survival of the fittest. I commend them as helps to being "happy though human"—even though you are readers of freshman themes!

The First Few Weeks in English I

JOHN BUSHMAN¹

I HAD been more or less aware for a number of years that the method I like to pursue in the first few weeks of a freshman composition course is controversial. It remained for a more than lively discussion at Rolla, Missouri, with composition teachers from several Missouri colleges to show me that it is to some teachers of

English far from acceptable after extensive explanation and defense.² But I still like my method. Defense of it has, in fact, shown me new merits in it. I'd like to present it here in the hope that, if it does not win converts, it will at least con-

² At a meeting of the Humanities Division of the Missouri Section of the American Society for Engineering Education, April 1, 1950.

¹ St. Louis University.

tribute to the teaching of that most complicated, difficult, exasperating, and important subject, freshman composition.

I believe in theme-writing from the very start: a theme a week from the first week. Many teachers oppose this method on the ground that the average freshman is not ready in the first few weeks to write a theme worth any instructor's serious attention; they believe that the freshman must first be taught punctuation, the principles of good diction, sentence analysis, paragraphing, outlining, and so on—that he must have a short course in the theory of composition before he can engage in its practice. The analytic study of composition has its value whether themes are assigned in the first few weeks or not. Any freshman course should include such study from the first. But analytic study is immensely more valuable when it can be accompanied by original writing. After all, nothing teaches writing like writing; nothing finally teaches writing *but* writing.

The last assertion is surely incontestable. It is the reason I believe the student should write regularly throughout the course, and from the first week. The problem at the beginning of the semester is to find a kind of writing the student can do with modest success at that stage, and there is a kind: the personal experience theme based on a single incident or episode of the student's past life. For example, an account of a fishing trip, of participation in a debate or athletic contest, of raising an animal to exhibit at a county fair, of an auto accident, of a rescue from drowning. This is a homely kind of theme, one that many teachers think beneath the college level. But my experience is that it is a theme the average brand-new freshman can write with skill enough to achieve unity and coherence and often a certain effectiveness.

The beginner can write the "incident theme" at the outset, even if he cannot write any other kind, for the following reasons:

1. He knows his subject thoroughly. He can, therefore, write with a fluency that only familiarity with a subject can give.

2. He is interested in his personal experiences. He may not, in fact, be interested in much besides them. The subject of the personal experience theme is, therefore, more likely to stir his imagination to the finding of effective details and their effective arrangement and emphasis.

3. The subject is concrete, specific. It can for this reason alone be more vividly, accurately, and interestingly conveyed by the beginning writer.

4. The student already knows something about this kind of composition. He perhaps wrote such a theme in high school (which would be a good reason for *beginning* with it). He is more likely to have written the incident theme previously than any other. But even if it is new to him, and if all writing is new to him, he has certainly related personal experiences orally to his family and friends. He knows in at least a rough way how to be effective in narrating an incident of his experience. It is likely that he has told orally the very experience he writes about in his college theme. When this is so, he has, as it were, already made a draft of it. His first attempt at writing it up is thus less likely to be a failure. Since he is new to writing—in many cases absolutely new—he is, by means of the incident theme, eased into this new medium of writing. He is less likely to be self-conscious, less likely to feel alien and inhibited.

5. The student has little problem of over-all organization and of sequence because this is a chronological kind of writ-

ing. He simply begins at the beginning of the happening and quits when he comes to the end of it. The simplicity of the chronological order is an enormous encouragement to the beginner. He does not have to struggle with an outline before beginning to write and doesn't run the risk of getting lost in the middle of his composition because he's forgotten where he wants to go or how he wants to get there. He can't lose direction and therefore, relieved of one big problem,

6. He can give proportionately more attention to his diction, sentences, paragraphs, spelling, and punctuation, which, goodness knows, are problems enough for him during the first few weeks. If these last aspects of writing were not of themselves enough to occupy the student's whole attention, a great many teachers of English I would not have virtually given up theme-writing in order to concentrate on them by means of handbook study and the writing of handbook exercises.

I believe, of course, in the careful noting of mistakes in the incident theme by the instructor and in careful correction of mistakes by the student. For correction purposes a good handbook is indispensable. When theme-writing is done concurrently with handbook work, the theme-writing gives the instructor the advantage of knowing what deficiencies are most serious in his class and in the work of particular students. The remedial work can thus be more directly useful than it otherwise might be and is more likely to be assimilated directly into the student's practice instead of remaining more or less academic.

It may be objected that a theme about a fishing trip does not result in the kind of expression the student most needs for success in college and professional life—that he needs formal English and the

ability to express himself in general and abstract language on logically organized, impersonal subjects. The latter is more or less the goal, true, but it cannot be achieved early, and it is my conviction that it can be better achieved—quicker and more securely—by beginning as here recommended, with the writing of the simplest kind of personal reminiscence. I believe in always keeping the student on largely familiar ground, as to both subject matter and form of expression. I'd say: Let him at the outset not only write about what he thoroughly knows but also, to a large extent, in the way that he conveniently can. Writing being pretty much new to him, he should not be too much criticized for his use of colloquial words and for his occasional colloquially constructed sentences. Let him use the common contractions and let him overdo the conjunctions *and* and *but*. Being severe with him for his colloquial habits is a good deal like constantly correcting a child learning to talk. It develops self-consciousness, undermines confidence, and tends to destroy interest in what is being said. The college student is not a child, but, like the child, he does his best language learning by more or less unconscious imitation. As he hears and reads the more formal kind of English, he tends to absorb its vocabulary and sentence patterns. If he is capable of progress, his greatest progress will come through such absorption and imitation. At the outset of his college career, rather than to be severely criticized for the details of his expression, the student should be respected for such articulateness as he has already achieved and should be encouraged to say *something* in his themes—even if far from correct. An overconcern with details early in the game irritates and then bores the ordinary student. He can be lost by the instructor in the third

week through overmeticulousness. Of course, the student, in being allowed considerable liberty of colloquialism in diction and construction, cannot be permitted to be vulgar, vague, or incoherent. But there is no especial danger here. Tolerance toward his colloquial bent, while it occasionally results in coarseness of expression, usually results also in less vagueness and incoherence than a too-early insistence on more formal ways. The student following his own inclinations knows better what he is saying and more readily finds the right words. Here, then, are very important intellectual gains through tolerance.

To put the whole objective here being outlined in a sentence: I believe in beginning with the personal, the concrete, the colloquial, the chronological, and working gradually toward their opposites or contrasts; at the same time never teaching a disrespect for the qualities that show themselves at the outset, and hoping that these qualities will continue to appear in the student's expression at all stages of his development, whenever they can contribute their vitality and immediacy. The articulateness which the student brings to college is really considerable in a narrow range, as his conversations with his own kind continually reveal. I believe in working with the vocabulary and combining abilities he already has; I do not think a large part of his equipment of expression needs to be destroyed before there can be development. If the analogy is not too homely: the sapling requires pruning, not surgery, and should have the assurance that, while it has a great deal of growing ahead of it, it has already come far, and in the right general direction. It is a democratic philosophy of composition teaching, yet not, I believe, indiscriminate.

Some suggestions must be given about

the way in which the personal experience theme should be assigned. The student should be assured that his experience is of interest and can result in themes that his fellow-classmates like to have read to them. He may feel that the kind of composition material he has is not important or impressive enough. The best way to allay his fears on this score is to read him some good personal experience compositions by previous students (the instructor should have a collection of the best he has received, or, better yet, his department should have a file). Student writing is a better source of models of "incident" writing than professional writing. Professional treatment of the autobiographical incident or episode usually involves sophistications that are irrelevant and distracting in the first weeks of the semester.

In assigning the incident theme, the instructor should, having encouraged the student with models of what he is to write, give him complete freedom of choosing his own topic. He should, however, help the student find a subject by suggesting a great many to him. The instructor should read a long list such as the following and then pick two or three and show how they might be developed, or simply read and analyze a composition based on one of the topics.

1. A Schoolyard Episode
2. My First Public Speech
3. A Fishing Experience
4. A Hunting Experience
5. A High School Prank
6. I Leave for College
7. Rescued
8. An Auto Accident
9. My First Date
10. A Tornado
11. Getting a Story for the Paper
12. An Experience with One of My Pets
13. A Vacation Episode
14. Meeting a Celebrity
15. My Debut as an Actor or Actress

16. My First Visit to My Fraternity or Sorority
17. My First Solo Flight
18. My First Day on the Job

It will be seen that there are both sensational ("An Auto Accident") and unsensational ("A High School Prank") topics in the list. The student should be told that both kinds of topics are good—that everybody is interested in sensational happenings, or the newspapers would not be so full of them, and that everybody is likewise interested in the unsensational experiences that everyone has had or knows about, if these are reported with enthusiasm. Both kinds provide valuable practice in writing.

After a theme or two based on a single incident, the student can be allowed to join two or three incidents in the same composition. Examples are: some interesting occurrences during his last vacation trip, during his last weeks in high school, while working at a summer job. This is a more difficult kind of theme, since it involves the problem of selecting incidents that go well together, arranging them in effective order, and joining them smoothly.

The personal experience theme does not have to be devoid of "intellectual" content. I do not believe in making any kind of prescription of subject matter in the first two or three themes of the semester, but thereafter, to keep from hearing about those fishing trips all term and to get a little more significance into the compositions, I like to suggest personal experience topics such as the following: to the engineering student, an account of

an experience operating, making, or repairing some kind of mechanism; to the pre-law or pre-medical student, a visit to a courtroom or a big hospital; to the political science or sociology "major," an experience participating in political or social service work or observing a phase of politics or social work; etc. There can very well be more than one theme of this kind in the first semester, and in successive themes of the type the student can be encouraged to put less emphasis on *what I did and saw* and more on the objective problem or facts involved. But it does no harm if all the themes in English I have a considerable *I* content. The personal element is always a source of inspiration. It is a means by which the student keeps himself interested and thus his readers interested; it is the secret to the attainment in the first semester of such marvelous compositional virtues as fluency, coherence, clarity, and vitality.

The hypothetical average freshman at the outset of his college career not only has not written much; he has not read much—certainly not much of the kind of writing he is expected to read in college. He hasn't the vocabulary, or the information and ideas that would give him the vocabulary, of such reading matter.

The assignment of themes based largely on personal experience, beginning with several humble incident themes, can keep this student writing and interested in writing until he has acquired information and ideas enough to give his compositions the substance looked for on the college level.

What kind of dictionary of current usage do teachers of English want? What information would they expect to find in it? The publication of such a dictionary is under consideration. For information on how you can influence the project, write the Committee on Current English Usage, 211 West Sixty-eighth Street, Chicago 21.

Current English Forum

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ARCHIBALD A. HILL, JAMES B. McMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

THE USE OF SO AS AN INTENSIFIER

In an article entitled "Language Attitude," published in the September, 1930, issue of the *English Journal*, I drew two conclusions regarding the use of *so* as an intensifier in literary materials covering a period from Old English to 1930. These conclusions were:

1. *So* has been used, and still is, as a kind of quasi-intensifier in situations where, although it is not followed by an *as-* or a *that-*clause, there is some implied comparison, some reference to a previous standard, idea, etc.
2. *So* has been used, and still is, as a pure or full intensifier; at least, in certain locutions the implied comparison is practically nonexistent.

I also suggested that the teacher's problem should be that of preventing the excessive use of this word in these two senses and that to exclude it entirely would be to deny the student the use of a very effective language tool.

In the course of the investigation, I found examples of one or the other of these two constructions in the writings of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Browning, Hardy, Frost, Noyes, Henry James, Jr., Robert Bridges, Conrad, and others. At times, I found examples of both constructions in the work of the same author. Furthermore, I collected instances from such periodicals and newspapers as *Scribner's Magazine*, *Harper's*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *London Quarterly Review*, the *Times* (London), the *Washington Post*, the *Kansas City Times*, and others.

About two or three years ago I returned to this problem because many textbook-writers were still ignoring the facts of

usage which my study had revealed. In examining some of the literary material which has been published since 1930, I soon discovered that there was no need for modifying the conclusions which I had arrived at about twenty years ago. The truth of this statement may be seen from the following examples, taken from among many which I have collected recently. They should convince any unbiased mind that the constructions are legitimate.

GROUP I

In each of these examples there is an implied *as-* or *that-*clause:

"There can be few authors of such eminence who have drawn *so* little from their own roots, who have been *so* isolated from any surroundings" (T. S. Eliot, "From Poe to Valéry," *Hudson Review*, II [autumn, 1949], 329).

"In short, all three novels were probably a long way beyond what one would expect from *so* young a writer" (Granville Hicks, "The Reputation of James Gould Cozzens," *College English*, XI [January, 1950], 178).

"Shakespeare himself has passed through the doldrums, and Donne and Blake, *so* secure in present estimation, were once rescued from oblivion" (Herbert Read, "Wordsworth's Philosophical Faith," *Sewanee Review*, LVIII [autumn, 1950], 566).

"Why was this generation which had been *so* ill used, which had *so* many grievances—why was it *so* lacking in youthful energies?" (Oscar Handlin, "Yearning for Security," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLXXXVII [January, 1951], 26).

GROUP II

In each of these examples there is practically no implied comparison:

"There was *so* much to write" (Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories* [New

York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938], quoted from *Great Short Stories*, ed. C. Neider [New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1950], p. 141).

"It [Elizabethan drama] was *so* new for one thing; it only came into being thirty odd years before Shakespeare appeared" (David Cecil, *Poets and Story-Tellers* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1949], p. 6).

"When he speaks of the mind being violated by an ideal, Mr. Eliot—in this as in *so* much else a romantic—is simply sharing the horror of the earlier romantics..." (Lionel Trilling, "Contemporary American Literature in Its Relation to Ideas," *American Quarterly*, I [fall, 1949], 199).

"Fourteen years ago it seemed incredible that he was eighty, his mind was *so* active and his pen *so* sharp" (Brooks Atkinson, "Bernard Shaw," *New York Times*, November 5, 1950, sec. 2, p. 2).

In conclusion, I wish to call the reader's attention to Professor Pooley's comments on this usage in his recent book, *Teaching English Usage*, where, among other things, he refers the reader to the following excerpt from the *New English (Oxford) Dictionary*:

So (14): In affirmative clauses, tending to become a mere intensive without comparative force, and sometimes emphasized in speaking and writing. Used thus by King Alfred, Gower, Dryden, Richardson, Keats, Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and others.

The use of *so* as a quasi-intensifier and as a pure intensifier is also listed as acceptable in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1949) under *so*, adv., 2. a and b.

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"ANYTHING GOES"

It is unfortunate, as Harold B. Allen has pointed out,¹ that Mario Pei in his *Story of Language*² takes a dim view of the doctrine of usage. Professor Pei seems to object es-

¹ "All Is Not Gold," *College English*, November, 1950, pp. 106-7.

² Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1949.

pecially to the twice-quoted statement that "language is what people speak, not what someone thinks they ought to speak." In Professor Pei's opinion, furthermore, recognizing that language is what people speak "gives *carte blanche* and free play to all slang, colloquialisms and substandard forms" (p. 409). Professor Allen has justly condemned this charge that advocates of a realistic standard based on usage lack all sense of discrimination. We have standards; and Professor Pei, as an educated and able writer, helps to form such a standard for educated writing. Realistically, his usage is good usage. Yet we know textbooks, tests, and teachers who would take a very dim view of these perfectly normal locutions, which he uses:

... there was equal confusion and fluctuation ... [p. 133].

In addition to the original Chinese-English pidgin, there is the Melanesian variety ... ; a variety used in New Guinea; one used by the Blackfellows of Australia; a *beche-la-mar* ... that appears in Tahiti ... [p. 302].

[Cf. R. W. Pence, *A Grammar of Present-Day English* (1947), p. 209: "A verb agrees with its subject even when the subject follows the verb." For a more accurate statement see Albert H. Marckwardt, *Scribner's Handbook of English* (2d ed., 1948), p. 221.]

Other writers ... claim that "a language is ..." [p. 409].

[Cf. Sanders, Jordan, Limpus, and Magoon, *Unified English Composition* (1945), p. 176:

"Incorrect: I *claim* that he's right. (Use *maintain*.)

"Correct: I *claim* my inheritance. (*Claim* means to demand as due.)" See *The American College Dictionary*.]

The word has gotten crossed ... [p. 252].

Some ... have gotten into Brazilian dancing ... [p. 253].

[Cf. Jefferson, Peckham, and Wilson, *Freshman Rhetoric and Practice Book* (rev. ed., 1928), p. 647: "Gotten: obsolescent for the past participle *got*." See the dictionaries.]

There are no inhibitions, no restraints, no holds barred, provided semantic transfer is accomplished, which it usually is [p. 425].

[Cf. Summers and Patrick, *College Composi-*

tion (1946), p. 128: "The pronoun *has* a definite and single antecedent (not a clause or general idea). This antecedent is expressed (not implied) in a noun, another pronoun, a gerund, an infinitive, a noun clause." See *pronoun* in *Webster's New Collegiate*.]

Chinese, on the contrary, has carried the process of functional change farther than English [p. 120].

Other tongues carry the distinction much further [p. 128].

[Cf. Ralph B. Allen, *English Grammar* (1950), p. 142: "*Further* and *farthest* are, however, used only of distance or time that is real." See *The American College Dictionary*.]

The above, let me emphasize, is not intended to disparage Professor Pei's usage, which is good usage. It is not intended to disparage the specific texts cited, all of which are very useful. It is intended to disparage make-believe standards of correctness which do not accurately describe the language of educated persons, either in speaking or in writing.

That an advocate of usage need not give carte blanche even to an educated and able writer is illustrated by this sentence:

Translation of place-names are often curious [p. 68].

Whether Professor Pei or a printer is responsible, *translation* is not normally construed as a plural.

Professor Pei's implication that a standard based on usage means "anything goes" would be less irksome if it were less common.³ We advocates of a usage standard, however, are at least partially responsible for this opposition to a perfectly reasonable idea. In opposing eighteenth-century precepts, we frequently lead others to believe that we advocate truck-drivers' English for everyone; we frequently fail to make clear that we advocate no such thing. When I first became acquainted with the idea that

language *is*, and is not a mere bundle of prescriptions, the instructor made much of the slogan, "Whatever is, is right." Applying the quotation to language captured my fancy, but, two years later, the slogan did not serve as a useful bridge to the teaching of freshman composition. I too took, if not a dim, at least a perplexed view of the doctrine of usage. A more recent example is the title of Robert Hall's justly praised *Leave Your Language Alone!*⁴ Professor Hall makes amply clear that one conforms to standards under social penalty (p. 13); he makes equally clear that he is writing journalistically in opposition to the commercial exploitation of linguistic insecurity (p. 9). Yet the title, which will be read by infinitely more people than will read the book, clearly implies that "anything goes." In summarizing, Professor Hall explains why he used the title:

But to return to our basic point: the message that linguistics has for our society at present is primarily the one that we have used as the title of this book: *LEAVE YOUR LANGUAGE ALONE!* We put it this way on purpose, to emphasize that any meddling with our language, by ourselves or others, in the name of "correctness," of spelling, or of nationalism, is harmful [p. 248].

Sound as this passage, even out of context, is, the intelligent and determined purist is certain to object that Professor Hall is slighting the idea of social acceptability and the legitimate attempt to strive for greater clarity, forcefulness, or appeal.

It is impossible, of course, to find absolute lines to separate justifiable improvement of sentences and diction, the illusions most of us have about educated speech, and the pedantry of those who would keep eighteenth-century rules regardless. As we state our objections to pedantry, we should try to avoid overstatements that invite counterobjections.

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³ See, e.g., Kenneth L. Knickerbocker, "The Freshman Is King; or, Who Teaches Who?" *College Composition and Communication*, December, 1950, pp. 11-15.

⁴ Ithaca, N.Y.: Linguistica, 1950.

Round Table

EXPOSITORY WRITING FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS

One is perpetually hearing complaints about the quality of the writing done by upperclassmen in our colleges and universities. Professors in the humanities, and in the sciences, too, declare that the composition of juniors and seniors is often no better, and is sometimes even worse, than that of the average freshman.

As generally as this situation has been recognized, however, all too little has been done to combat it. Some teachers favor advanced composition work for every upperclassman, admitting at the same time that there is no immediate hope for an extension of required English beyond the sophomore year. Others propose a special class for those juniors whose composition is particularly weak,¹ but they agree that such a system has one obvious defect: in no way can it serve the hordes of students who are barely able to write a passable paragraph and who would like to learn how to write more capably.

There is one possibility, however, which has not been given a great deal of thought. In addition to offering some kind of remedial work, we could easily reorient an advanced composition course already existing and try to make it attractive not to English majors alone but to all students of average or even below-average writing ability. Stressing practice in the writing of expository essays rather than plays and short stories, the course would appeal to many who are capable enough in their chosen field of study but highly apologetic about the way they express themselves on paper.

At the College of William and Mary such a course is given each semester—two hours weekly for class meetings, one for conferences. It is required of all English majors,

¹ Work of this kind has been undertaken at the University of North Carolina.

but, since creative writing is not demanded, concentrators from a dozen different fields generally comprise at least half the class. The latter enrol simply because they are now mature enough to see, as the freshman somehow does not see, that the ability to write well is useful to men entering any profession and not to prospective English teachers or future novelists alone.

At the outset, English 209 resembles a typical freshman composition course. The students are asked to write biographical or narrative essays; the instructor goes through their papers for the more glaring mechanical errors and then discusses these in class. But after about two weeks there is usually little need to continue the review of grammar and punctuation; fewer and fewer mistakes occur in the papers. The instructor can therefore turn to consideration of methods of organization, matters of emphasis and expression, use of metaphor, simile, analogy, and the like. More important, he can now discuss the first of the many types of exposition to be handled and explain how the students should go about writing papers of that type.

Actually it is the method of teaching rather than what is taught which has set English 209 apart from the usual advanced composition course. For one thing, no textbook is used. Why bore the students by having them study lengthy definitions of each expository type, descriptions necessarily so broad and vague that little can be learned from them? If we wish to make sure that the salient features of a character sketch are understood, a ten-minute lecture and a brief oral reading or two will probably suffice. Why, too, should valuable time in a semester course be consumed in the close study of "models of good writing"? Models always seem forbidding to the student, seeming either too dull or too "literary." He can hardly appreciate a piece of prose lifted

bodily from its context; nor can he avoid feeling embarrassed and perhaps even irritated when he is expected to follow the example of Emerson or Thoreau, Hardy or Macaulay. But a much more serious objection to the textbook approach is the fact that it is almost impossible to find models that really illustrate the kind of writing we wish from our students: if the organization of a particular selection is good, the diction is not; if the expression is vivid, the system of punctuation or of paragraphing is obsolete.

Discarding the use of textbooks as unproductive, the instructor in English 209 utilizes almost every class hour as a laboratory period for the analysis of student papers. But he does not merely read the papers and ask for criticism. That procedure, adopted in so many composition courses, at best evokes only such meaningless comments as "I think it sounds pretty good" or "The opening is all right but the rest is weak." Instead, carefully selected essays are mimeographed, each student is given a copy, chief critics are appointed, and a day or two later discussion begins. Often the criticism centers around possible rearrangement of paragraphs or the writer's logic and his prejudices; sometimes it is the diction, wordiness, or even the punctuation that gets close attention.

If only the instructor is skilful enough in choosing the papers to analyze and in guiding the discussion, this system will work far better than those usually adopted. Students at the junior and senior levels are often better critics than we think—unfortunately, they are better critics than writers. But, good or bad, they are curious about one another's writing; they are on familiar ground and flatter themselves that they know how a fellow-classmate's work could be improved. Hence, they will dissect an essay with an enthusiasm that is never found where analysis of printed texts is a main concern. Nor is this enthusiasm wasted. Having so many writing problems in common with the others, a student can hardly avoid profiting even when someone else's essay is being discussed. A good student

knows that this is true and will eagerly participate in the criticizing, while a poor one will at least remain alert, if only in the hope that he will not shame himself by committing similar errors the next time he writes a paper.

But, whatever method is used, it is clearly time that every college and university had an advanced exposition course which both faculty and students could regard as eminently worth while. Today, as everyone knows, administrators are questioning the desirability of two years of required English, and grave doubts are being expressed as to whether we are getting anywhere at all with freshman composition. Perhaps it is vital, therefore, that we continue to seek better ways of teaching our first-year courses. But effort ought not to be directed toward this alone. We can win a great deal of respect for ourselves, if, in organizing advanced composition work, we pay less attention to the creative talents of a handful of English majors and more to the deplorable writing ability of upperclassmen in every academic field.

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SELECTING STUDENTS FOR CREATIVE-WRITING CLASSES

So many undergraduates want to be "writers" that the courses in creative writing are often overregistered. Therefore, it becomes a problem for the instructor to select those students who can best profit by the course and to eliminate the others. Selection is easy after several weeks or months, but by that time it is too late for the unqualified student to register in another course for the semester. With the college credit system what it is, he is almost compelled to remain in the course, hopeless, a misfit, taking up the instructor's time and wasting his own time. A means of selecting and eliminating students in the first day or two of the term is almost imperative.

Actually, there seems to be no perfect way of predicting success in the creative-writing class, but I have found that a ques-

tionnaire like the following (presented at the first meeting of the class and required to be answered in writing by the next meeting) is more nearly perfect than any other device I have tried. It tells the instructor whether the student is imaginatively alive to the world about him, whether he is intellectually and emotionally responsive to that world, whether he has any originality, and (on the side) whether he can express himself clearly, forcefully, or picturesquely. What it does not tell is whether the student is willing to work hard and to be patient in trying to improve his writing—but it is partly the instructor's task, no doubt, to inspire the student to want to work hard on his writing.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Of all the subjects you have ever taken in college, which do you like best? What do you like about it?
2. Have you ever been to any locality, or in any environment, that you would like to write about? Identify it.
3. What would you like most to write about in that place or environment—its people and their way of life, its social contrasts and conflicts, its problems as a whole, the personal problems of its individual inhabitants, your adjustments to it, or your experiences there? Give details.
4. Answer the same question for the college you are now attending.
5. What kind of neighborhood do you now live in? What is your customary emotional reaction to it?
6. Have you ever worked for money? Doing what? Did you like or dislike your work? Why?
7. Do you have any general personal or emotional attitude toward the world that you think other people might like to know about, or profit from knowing?
8. Of the everyday sensuous experiences of your life, which ones please you most, and which ones displease you? Make a list.
9. Do the same for your everyday personal contacts.
10. Do you have any brothers and sisters? What are they like?
11. Characterize yourself as a child up to about the age of twelve to fourteen.
12. What did the world seem like to you then?
13. Does the world you are now living in seem better or worse than your childhood world? Explain.
14. Characterize yourself as a high school student.
15. How do you think an impartial person would characterize you now?
16. Has your family ever weathered any tribulations that have left an imprint on you? Do you care to explain?
17. Have you had any bitter experiences of your own that have left an imprint on you? Do you care to explain?
18. Have you had any happy emotional experiences that have left an imprint on you? Do you care to explain?
19. What gives you most pleasure in your life on the campus?
20. What do you think is the best thing college has done for you?
21. The worst thing?
22. Have you ever hated anybody intensely? Why? Describe him.
23. Briefly characterize the person you know who most excites your contempt.
24. The one who most excites your admiration.
25. Do you have any *decided* sociological or political opinions? Give details briefly.
26. Do you have any philosophical or religious opinions that you do not consider quite conventional? Give details briefly.
27. Have you arrived at any conclusions about human nature in general? Give details briefly.
28. What most interests you at this period of your life—art in any of its forms, people, sensuous experiences, nature, children, the opposite sex, ideas, the national and international situation, religion, or what? Choose two or three, and give details.
29. Have you ever been critically or creatively interested more than average in any of the arts?
30. Do you have any favorite author or authors? Who? What attracts you to them?
31. Have you ever tried to write poetry? Do you care to submit any of it with this paper?
32. If you were told right now to start planning a novel, what do you think might be its general subject?

There is no answer-key to these questions. But, after reading the answers, the instructor will have no doubts whatever as to the students in his class who *might* be able to

learn to write. He can separate the goats from the sheep with no trouble at all. Moreover, if he keeps the answers to consult in future conferences with the students, he will find them extraordinarily useful. By taking them from his desk and looking over them just before a student is to arrive for a conference, he will find out a great deal about the student as a person and will be better able to reach his mind through stimulating suggestions and to direct him to the particular type or tone of writing that suits him.

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THE SERMON ON GENTILESSE

In "The Converted Knight in Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale'" (*College English*, February, 1951) Joseph P. Roppolo demonstrates that the Loathly Lady's sermon on gentilesse is the turning point of the Wife's story: this sermon instructs the Knight "that true gentilesse comes from God alone" and thus converts him to "an awareness of moral worth and beauty" in his wife. Additional force is given this interpretation when the Wife's "Tale" is considered in relation to other tales dealing with marriage. In the "Clerk's Tale" the gentilesse that comes from God alone undeniably characterizes Griselda and is recognized by Walter (see especially E. 155-68), while in the "Merchant's Tale" the lack of this quality perverts the marriage of January and May. In the "Squire's Tale," which deals with love if not with marriage, the faithless tercelet who "semed welles of alle gentilesse" lacks the real thing, but Canacee possesses it (F. 479-83, 504-20). In his "Prologue" the Franklin admires the Squire's gentilesse; and it is the Franklin who, as Kittredge argues, solves the problem of marriage: the "relation of mutual love and forbearance, the outcome of gentilesse, . . . carries [Dorigen and Arveragus] safely through the entanglements of the plot and preserves their wedded happiness unimpaired as long as they live" (*Chaucer and His Poetry* [1946], p. 207). If, as Kittredge believes, it is the Wife of Bath who initiates the discussion of marriage, the sermon on

gentilesse is an early forecast of the resolution. In fact, the Wife in ostensibly praising one kind of marriage has resolved her story in praise of quite a different kind: the marriage of the Loathly Lady and the Knight looks as though it would turn out to be more like Dorigen's and Arveragus' than like those of the Wife and her five husbands. Mr. Roppolo mentions "the ironic fact that the Wife of Bath cannot qualify under her own definition of gentilesse." The irony is strengthened by the Lady's at least partial relinquishment of mastery (D. 1240-44, 1255-56), which suggests Dorigen's similar renunciation (F. 758-59).

This is not the only time when the Wife's adroitness in juggling her authorities has made her the victim of dramatic irony. As Mr. Roppolo demonstrates, she knows how to alter her materials for her own purposes. What she does not know, or at any rate care about, is that her method of disputation must have been pretty transparent to several of the pilgrims. The Pardoner ironically calls her a "noble prechour," and the Friar laughs at her treatment of "scole-matere." The Clerk, although he holds his fire, must have been even more aware of the Wife's selection and interpretation of Scripture to her own ends. It seems likely, therefore, that the Wife, who thus becomes a victim of irony in her "Prologue," should be treated similarly in her "Tale."

The sermon on gentilesse, consequently, not only has the structural value that Mr. Roppolo points out but also links the "Tale" more closely with the Wife's "Prologue" and the other tales dealing with marriage. Perhaps this linking is most effective if the marriage group is defined and arranged as it is by Kittredge, with the Wife opening the discussion and the Franklin closing it; but, regardless of order, the desirability of gentilesse in love and marriage is a theme linking several tales, and Mr. Roppolo's argument for the function of the gentilesse sermon within the "Wife of Bath's Tale" is strengthened by evidence of its structural value among the tales.

W. P. ALBRECHT

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Report and Summary

Nominations for NCTE Officers

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF the National Council of Teachers of English present the following slate of candidates for Council officers in 1952:

For President: LENNOX GREY, New York, New York

For First Vice-President: HARLEN M. ADAMS, Chico, California

For Second Vice-President: HELEN K. MACKINTOSH, Washington, D.C.

For Secretary-Treasurer: W. WILBUR HATFIELD, Chicago, Illinois

For Directors-at-Large (six to be elected): J. W. ASHTON, Bloomington, Indiana; ALTHEA BEERY, Cincinnati, Ohio; MARIE D. BRYAN, College Park, Maryland; INEZ FROST, Hutchinson, Kansas; LOU LABRANT, New

York, New York; IRVIN C. POLEY, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The slate will be voted upon next Thanksgiving in Cincinnati. The Nominating Committee, selected by ballot of the Board of Directors in Milwaukee last November, includes Marion C. Sheridan (*chairman*), Harold A. Anderson, Angela M. Broening, Thomas Clark Pollock, and Edna L. Sterling.

Additional nominations may be made by petition of twenty Directors accompanied by written consent of any person(s) so nominated and delivered to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Council at 211 West Sixty-eighth Street, Chicago 21, on or before August 15, 1951.

About Education

"CRITIQUE OF COMMUNICATIONS in General Education" by Albert H. Marckwardt and "Illiteracy at the University Level," by Eugene R. Purpus appearing, respectively, in the January and February issues of *Higher Education*, are important reading for all teachers of college English. Professor Marckwardt considers with critical objectivity the aims, the content, the class procedures, and the testing devices which have been developed in connection with the work in communications. He thinks the integration of the four language activities has had a beneficial effect not only upon the operation of the newly established communications courses themselves but also upon the traditional freshman English course, but he warns that there are many complex tasks ahead. For example, take a pressing problem in connection with reading. Entering college students have a wide range of read-

ing ability. Many may be at eleventh- or twelfth-grade level, the poorest may be at the ninth-grade level, the best may have attained the skill of college seniors. This means that college English teachers need to be better informed on what has been going on in the field of remedial reading during the last three decades and editors and compilers of freshman texts need to take into consideration these variations in reading abilities. Again, the success of the communication-skills courses depends as much upon the establishment of an effective teacher-training program as upon any other single factor. Much more needs to be done in this field. How great is the student need for training in communications is made evident by Professor Purpus in his article on "Illiteracy." He states that if we take "illiterate" as meaning "able to read with comprehension and to write coherently," the

blunt truth is that a very large part of the public is, in fact, illiterate and the incidence of real illiteracy in this country is rapidly rising. He stresses that, if the situation is to be improved, from the very beginning of formal education we should try to achieve a disciplined study of, and a respect for, accuracy in the arts of reading and writing. As it is, the major weakness of our educational system is that "we do not carry our love and admiration for scientific exactitude into the area which is absolutely basic to all learning."

RUDOLF FLESCH'S NEW BOOKLET *How to Write Better* and the new Reading-Ease Calculator recently developed by General Motors take up a full page of the *New Yorker's* "Notes and Comments" (March 3). It is skeptical of both. "Communication by the written word," says the *New Yorker*, in part, "is a subtler (and more beautiful) thing than Dr. Flesch or General Motors imagines. They contend that the 'average reader' is capable of reading only what tests 'Easy,' and that the writer should write at or below that level. This is a presumptuous and degrading idea. There is no average reader, and to reach down toward this mythical character is to deny that each of us is on the way up, ascending. . . . A country whose writers are following a calculating machine downstairs is not ascending."

WILLIAM M. SALE, OF CORNELL University, Lucyle Hook, of Barnard College, and Strang Lawson, of Colgate University, have been appointed a committee of the Association of Colleges and Universities of New York State to review college English admission requirements in terms of "competence" rather than courses or credits.

BACK NUMBERS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH: A complete set of *College English* (October, 1939, to the present) may be purchased from Professor George R. Coffman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. The New York State Maritime College, Fort Schuyler, New York 61, would

like to complete its library set of *College English*. It needs the issues of Volume I (October, 1939, through May, 1940) and that of January, 1948.

A LIST OF WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS of English to be held this summer at sixteen colleges and universities appears in the April *English Journal*. Primarily concerned with composition at the first-year college level will be the Communications Workshop at the University of Southern California, Harold E. Briggs and Harold B. Allen, directors, to be held from June 25 to August 3, for three hours' credit, at a cost of \$48.00. (See Professor Briggs's article on the communications course as taught at the University of Southern California, "Principles of Group Dynamics in the College Classroom," *College English*, November, 1950.) Other workshops will stress teaching at the junior and senior high school levels.

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY has received the library of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (formerly located in Washington, D.C., now in New York City). The collection of 70,000 volumes valued at \$250,000 is a rich source for the study of international questions and world literature.

FOREIGN-STUDY OPPORTUNITIES numbering 30,600 are reported in UNESCO's new edition of *Study Abroad*, an international handbook of fellowships, scholarships, and study grants. Volume III of the study guide, published annually, may be purchased from the Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York City, for \$1.25.

A SEMINAR IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS, dealing with the press, radio, films, and television and their impact on modern society, will be added to the graduate degree in journalism offered by Fordham University's Journalism and Creative Writing Division.

"PUBLICATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE of College Teachers of English" (Texas), Volume XV, No. 3, is the first issue to appear in full letterpress magazine format. It presents the proceedings of the Conference's 1950 meeting. The abstracts are readable; the papers must have been unusually good. To finance this and other expanded activities, the registration fee was increased to \$1.00.

THE THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE on College Composition and Communication took place March 30-31 at the Morrison Hotel, Chicago. More than four hundred persons attended. George S. Wykoff, Purdue University, general chairman, was ill, and the Conference was presided over by Harold B. Allen, University of Minnesota, associate chairman, who had had charge of arranging the program. Henry W. Sams, University of Chicago, was chairman of local arrangements. Three general sessions, four general work groups, and seventeen workshops (three with two sections) were held. Among the participants were authors Monroe Beardsley (*Practical Logic, Straight Thinking*) and Frederick Muehl (*Interview with India*). Beardsley's address was entitled "Let's Apply Some Logic" and Muehl's, "Writing from Experience." Reports of all meetings will be published in the summer C.C.C.C. *Bulletin*. Next year's conference probably will be held some place other than Chicago, toward the East.

MANY OF TODAY'S PARENTS ARE perplexed or even alarmed by the differences between the courses in English which they had and the courses offered in modern secondary schools. In such states of mind parents can easily become tools of reactionaries who wish to use them as a means of blocking educational progress in the public schools. The problem of how to interpret the modern school's English curriculum to adult members of the community is thus an important one which should be squarely met. One means of accomplishing this task of public relations is the pamphlet, *An In-*

terpretation of the Modern School's English Program to the Layman. Written by Kansas Professor Oscar M. Haugh in consultation with high school teachers of English, the pamphlet is reprinted in the *University of Kansas Bulletin of Education* for February. Haugh relates in a brief but effective manner the changes which have required modification of the old reading and writing curriculum. He explains the new emphasis on speaking and listening. And he refutes in an incidental and disarming fashion the charges leveled at modern methods of teaching. A copy of the *Bulletin* can be obtained at cost by addressing the Department of Education, University of Kansas, at Lawrence. Haugh's pamphlet or ones like it should be circulated in an attractive format to citizens in every community; good public relations are essential if improved teaching of English is to continue.

THE NEED FOR BETTER PUBLIC relations is underlined in the report by NCTE delegates of the Third Off-the-Record Conference concerning Attacks on Educators, Education, and Educational Publications held recently in New York City. National Council Representatives Marion Sheridan and Lennox Grey heard reports that public education is being attacked throughout the country. Frequently such attacks center on systems which have developed "progressive" curriculums. Real motives, however, are usually selfish rather than educational; in many areas it is groups interested in lower taxes or professional racketeers who initiate assaults. Local malcontents receive ready assistance from such professional hatchetmen as Allen Toll and John T. Flynn. A number of influential magazines—often unwittingly—also aid in such campaigns. The usual cries are that modern schools are atheistic, that students do not learn enough facts, that "progressive" education breeds "Reds." To counteract this very real peril, the members of the Off-the-Record Conference urged educators to meet the attack by informing the public of the facts through pamphlets, arti-

cles, and work with community organizations. It was emphasized that responsibility for such public relations falls upon the teachers as well as upon the administrators. The latter alone have proved to be ineffective in a number of instances.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL Council of Teachers of English have lost their employment because they refused to sign the oath prescribed in California's Levering Act. The first paragraph of the oath is a standard declaration of allegiance to the nation and the state. The paragraph which has aroused protest is this:

And I do further swear (or affirm) that I do not advocate, nor am I a member of any party or organization, political or otherwise, that now advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of the State of California by force or violence or other unlawful means; that within the five years immediately preceding the taking of this oath (or affirmation) I have not been a member of any party or organization, political or otherwise, that advocated the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of the State of California by force or violence or other unlawful means except as follows:

.....
(If no affiliations, write in the words
"No Exceptions")

and that during such time as I am a member or employee of the

.....
(Name of Public Agency)

I will not advocate nor become a member of any party or organization, political or otherwise, that advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States or of the State of California by force or violence or other unlawful means.

The critics of the law also object to these three paragraphs, which they assert make teachers subject to any orders of unpredictable superiors and also destroy their tenure:

3100. It is hereby declared that the defense of the civil population during the present state of world affairs is of paramount state importance requiring the undivided attention and best efforts of our citizens. In furtherance of

such defense and in the exercise of police power of the State in protection of its citizens all public employees are hereby declared to be civil defense workers subject to such civilian defense activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.

3101. For the purpose of this chapter the term "civil defense worker" includes all public employees and all volunteers in any civilian defense organizations approved by the State Disaster Council. The term "public employees" includes all persons employed by the state or any county, city, city and county, state agency or public district, excluding aliens legally employed.

3102. Subject to the provisions of Section 3 of Article XX of the Constitution, all civil defense workers shall within the first 30 days of employment take and subscribe to the oath or affirmation required by this chapter.

"A PROCEDURE FOR THE Appraisal of the Mechanics of Group Discussion," by R. Stewart Jones, appears in *Progressive Education* for January. Jones recorded the discussion and then measured the amount of silence time, the number of volunteers, the number of spontaneous (without raising hands?) contributions, leader participation (in seconds), total number of participations, and the number of students participating only in the last two-thirds of the period. He applied these measures to two classes. One class proposed and planned its discussion and chose its leader. In the other (and academically better) class the instructor ordered the discussion, appointed able leaders, and supplied a list of priming questions. The "democratic" group made the better showing by these measures. Four observers who did not know about the differences in the planning unanimously agreed that the appointed leader was the more directive and the other discussion more lively and interesting. Playing the recording back to the class that made it and discussing virtues and faults seemed to the students the most helpful part of the whole experiment.

"LEADING GROUP DISCUSSION," BY Maurice P. Hunt, in *Social Education* (Feb-

ruary) in its lucid analysis and restatement of the aims and leading techniques of classroom discussion should be helpful to both the new and the experienced teacher. Professor Hunt first distinguishes between the values of discursive (conversational) and developmental (problem-solving) discussion and then confines himself chiefly to the latter, since it is the developmental discussion which "provides one of the highest types of learning situations which we can create for our students." He analyzes, respectively, with lively illustrations, the selection of discussion topics (be sure they are suitable; the best ones will be related to vital controversial issues); the phrasing of the topic (be specific enough so your age group can grasp it intellectually); the preparation of the teacher (scholarly preparation is necessary; don't get the students arguing about something you are ignorant about); the preparation of the class (sufficient preliminary discussion is necessary if students are to understand the issues); and hints on getting the discussion under way and then conducting it.

"FOLKLORE FOR THE SCHOOL," BY Philip D. Jordan, appears in the same issue of *Social Education*. This is a sensible article in which the author makes clear that the teaching of American literature and American history can be enhanced by use of folklore but that in itself it is no substitute for either. Its best use is by indirection. "If folklore can be integrated normally and naturally with all those areas that have to do with the American pattern, then it will add immensely to the pupil's understanding and appreciation of the forces that have moulded him and his society."

THE MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE recently made a few guesses as to what our schools will be like fifty years from now. Here they are: community colleges will be common; compulsory attendance age will be boosted to eighteen or twenty; adult education will be booming; differences between city and rural schools will have faded; all

teachers will have had at least five years of training; competition for grades will be a thing of the past; modern foreign languages will be as usual an elementary-school course as arithmetic, but Latin will have vanished; all subject matter in the grades will be "integrated," while separate subjects in high schools and colleges will be on the way out.

IN "GUIDANCE TOWARD COLLEGE Preparation" (*School and Society* for February 24) Arthur E. Traxler defines such guidance as "the development of abilities related to the higher mental processes and all round personality growth, to the end that the individual will be able to derive maximum profit from further education." The foundation, he states, to a larger degree than we sometimes realize, rests upon the basic skills of reading, number facility and understanding, spelling, and language expression. Guidance toward college preparation should include the early identification and correction of weaknesses in basic skills (students *can* learn them). Moreover, such guidance should start back in the sixth grade and from the beginning should be a joint venture between the school and the home, which should follow the development of the child together and plan *with* the child as a team. Among the preparatory measures taken should be an early appraisal of the student's general scholastic aptitude and consideration of that aptitude in relation to individual goals. Counseling philosophy and practice should be midway between directive and nondirective.

MAN'S TENDENCY TO USE AND RE-use a metaphor until it is thought of as a statement of fact is the subject of the lead article in the winter number of *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*. In it Weller Embler traces briefly the ways in which the dominant metaphors used by creative writers in previous eras reflected the ruling philosophy of their times. He then proceeds to his major point, which is that, when a metaphor is new, popular, and apt, those who find their attitudes implicit in the meta-

phor construe the metaphor to be not merely a felicitous figure of speech but a statement of fact. When such metaphors deal with political and social beliefs, the metaphors can become dangerous weapons. "When we take figurative language literally, we are in danger of behaving as if something were true which is manifestly not true unless we proceed to make it so." Thus, says Embler, "if we say enough times that men are like or look like bacteria, and if we see enough pictures showing the resemblance, we shall soon begin to behave toward men as we behave toward bacteria." To avoid such false behavior patterns, he advises a renewed emphasis upon making nice distinctions and a knowledge of subtle differences as well as an understanding of analogies. Man should not be "striving to cut each particular to the same pattern" but should be seeking "just and workable relationships among dissimilars."

TOO MANY TEACHERS EMPHASIZE the negative things we know about slow learners rather than a number of positive factors, according to W. B. Featherstone in the February *Clearing House*. Professor Featherstone admits such known negatives as the fact that the mental development of slow learners proceeds at a slower rate and on a lower level than similar development in average learners and that slow learners can never acquire some things that a rapid learner acquires without effort. He urges, however, that such negatives not be overstressed. Teachers are asked to think also in terms of the encouraging positive facts which enter the picture. Among these are: (1) Slow learners can think, reason, abstract, generalize, interpret, and draw conclusions—though not on so profound a level as quicker students. (2) If given an opportunity appropriate to their capacities, slow learners develop quite as wholesome social personalities as others. (3) Developmental characteristics (but not rates) are very similar in both the slow and the average learner. The slow learner who is a problem child or a delinquent is often that way not because of

his rate of learning but because of the failure of his teachers and other adult associates to recognize his virtues as well as his faults.

JOURNALISM STUDENTS AND JOURNALISM teachers will be interested in "I Asked the Soviet Embassy," by Charles Simms, in the March *Extension* (national Catholic monthly). Simms, an eighteen-year-old boy worried about the international situation, last summer was visiting in Washington. On the spot he decided he would just ask the Russians themselves why they talk and act as they do about peace, war, propaganda, etc. He rang the Soviet embassy doorbell and gained admittance by asking for a copy of the Soviet constitution to help in writing a term paper! There followed a long conversation with an embassy attaché in which Simms, as he reports it, asked many boyishly direct and undiplomatic questions and received direct and astounding answers. For example, he inquired of the Soviet attaché why we don't get exchange students from Russia as we do from other nations. He was told that Russian students are not sent to the United States "because we know that they would be mistreated, beaten, and tortured."

"THE WORLD OF THE CINEMA" is an excellent weekly column written by Alan Dent for the *Illustrated London News*. It is a world in which the American film plays but a repertory role, and for the American interested in the film productions of Europe regular perusal of Dent's column is one of the most expedient ways we know to keep informed on the subject.

TO HELP TEACH INTERNATIONAL understanding, the NEA has launched the United Nations Educational Service. The service maintains a teacher representative at the UN, selects and distributes teaching materials and classroom units, and publishes a biweekly newsletter for teachers. The newsletter, titled *UNIT* (United Nations Information for Teachers), contains

firsthand news of the UN, suggestions for teaching, and news of books, pamphlets, and audio-visual aids dealing with world understanding. For information concerning

membership, which is on a school rather than an individual basis, write to the service at 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

About Literature

IN "MILTON AND THE NEW CRITICISM" (winter *Sewanee Review*) Cleanth Brooks applies the techniques of the new criticism to classical poetry. We hasten to report that Milton survives nobly. Brooks first makes a comparison between the poetry of Donne and Milton. Donne's poetry, he says, is "founded on functional metaphor," Milton's on "large and eloquent statement"; Donne's metaphors are "abstruse and muscular," Milton uses "grand measured similes." He then suggests that Donne and Milton in their use of metaphor are not radically different, that both are related to a common concept of poetry. To prove his point he analyzes numerous passages from *Paradise Lost* and others of Milton's poems. He finds in each case that Milton's similes are tightly integrated with the theme of the poem, that they are not loosely decorative, and that Milton is using language to something like its maximum power. He points out that sometimes Milton's decisive metaphor is deeply imbedded in the context and depends on the context for its full power. The power "is that of momentum, not mere swiftness. Mass has been integrated with movement." He concludes that the way into a Milton poem seems so deceptively easy "that the splendid surface may beguile us into glib talk about Milton's grand simplicity." Actually, as he shows, there are complexities in Milton's poetry. They probably affect us unconsciously. If we care to explore them, we can find them.

SHAKESPEAREAN NOTES: THE first performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* took place at the Middle Temple in London, February 2, 1601. The 350th anniversary of the occasion was observed by another performance of the play last Febru-

ary 2 on the spot of the original production. Donald Wolfit directed and played Malvolio. Several of the scenes are pictured in the *London Sketch* (February 14). John Gielgud, who recently acted Hamlet in a radio version which he himself arranged, discusses in the *New York Times* (March 4) the principles he followed in making the abridged script. He does not believe, with many scholars, that Hamlet wreaks his own havoc by a so-called inability to make up his own mind. He believes that his lack of decision is a result of his tragic fate, not the cause of it; that his weakness is caused by grief brought on by the death of his father and his mother's remarriage. In making his abridgment of the play for radio production, Gielgud had not only to keep his interpretation of the character in mind but also his director's admonitions, "keep the story line, and keep the scenes the audience wants to hear—the ghost, soliloquies, and the gravedigger's scene." In the *Saturday Review of Literature* (January 20) John Mason Brown discusses Charles Lamb's comments on *Lear* and Louis Calhern's interpretation of the part. Lamb, he recalls, discusses the loss the tragedy is bound to sustain when an attempt is made to reduce the grandeur of its spirit to physical terms. Brown thinks Calhern succeeds to a degree he wouldn't have thought possible in proving that *Lear* is a part that can be acted.

THE SOCIETY FOR THEATRE RESEARCH, London, has recently issued its second annual publication, *The London Theatre in the Eighteen Thirties*, by Charles Rice, edited by Arthur Colby Sprague and Bertram Shuttleworth (pp. 86). This reprints the most important portions of the Rice manuscript in the Harvard Theatre Collec-

tion. Rice was a British Museum attendant by day, an inveterate playgoer by night. His manuscript diary "sets down with painstaking detail what he saw and heard upon the stage" during the years 1835-38. The publication is available only to members. For information, address The Society for Theatre Research, 7 Ashburnham Mansions, London, S.W.10.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE EDUCATIONAL theater is being given by congressional leaders in Senate Bill 266 and House Bill 454. These companion bills are to authorize the Federal Security administrator to bring to Washington theater productions of colleges and universities. The purpose is to further the development of the educational theater. The project would be supported by admission charges, the management to be by contract with the American National Theater and Academy, a corporation already organized under congressional charter. This is reported in *Higher Education* (February 15).

USING A BAKER'S DOZEN OF THE recently published volumes of short stories as his springboard, Leslie A. Fiedler in the winter *Kenyon Review* launches forth into a lively essay on "Style and Anti-style in the Short Story." The current spate of short-story anthologies and collections, he finds, gives ample evidence that there are a hopeless confusion of standards and an over-all poverty of performance in the short story. There is no common agreement as to what a short story is, and this has led to the defining of writing by genre and the establishment of "chummy little groups trying to live up to the canons of a particular kind of story as if it were 'the short story.'" As a result the short story has fallen heir to various alien obligations. The impulse toward the artificial has been strengthened, and the prestige of the plot has been undermined, "crushed between the upper and nether millstones of theme and symbol." Invention has become as suspect as

draftsmanship in painting, and the writer has become the exponent of focus, "the carefully plotted 'shot' of the candid camera man." The general inadequacy of the short story, Fiedler thinks, is the failure in style, and that failure derives from "the underlying inability to make enough of essential contemporary experience amenable to the control of language." It is only in science fiction, he says, with all its frailties, that we get "lively spontaneous manifestation in the contemporary short story." He thinks that it is the business of the more serious writers to be moving into this field "in attempt to redeem neo-Gothic horror for the total, subtle mind, as Poe redeemed it from the early German exponents of *schrecklichkeit*." For terror to be truly redeemed, humanized for use in moving fiction, he concludes, it must be understood as *real evil*. To that task the contemporary short-story writer should apply himself.

"THE CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY: 1951" is treated editorially by Ray B. West, Jr., in the winter *Western Review*. West is more cheerful about it than Fiedler. The short story of today, he points out, shows the influence in varying degrees of four writers of the past, James, Joyce, Chekhov, and Kafka. He discusses this influence as he sees it evidenced in the same crop of short stories of which Fiedler writes. For a really merry treatment of the craft of the writer, however, we must refer you to the series of articles by T. S. Watt in the December and January issues of *Punch*. Also, don't overlook the lead article in this issue of the *English Journal*!

NUMEROUS MYTHS HAVE ARISEN concerning Nobel prize-winner William Faulkner, perhaps because he has kept aloof from literary teas and suchlike nonsense. In the January *Partisan Review* Harvey Breit, who is a personal friend and a member of the editorial staff of the *New York Times Book Review*, undertakes to dispel a few of these legends. In the first place, he

says, Faulkner is not isolated, nor is he a recluse. He is a busy, active man who runs his own good-sized farm in Mississippi. Nor is he rude and illiterate but rather courteous and extremely well read. The impact of a first meeting is "intactness." He is not violent but "intense and of a deep neutrality." He is incorruptible. "He contains many of the characteristics that force men into confusion and compromise, but he himself acts with simplicity and conducts himself without compromise." Finally, he is "an un-Marxian man who believes in choice." Incidentally, Faulkner is also married, and Bennett Cerf reports that *Seventeen* has commissioned his daughter, Jill Faulkner, to write of her experiences in accompanying her father to Stockholm to receive the Nobel prize. For the full text of Faulkner's magnificent acceptance speech see the *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, January 14, or the *Saturday Review of Literature*, February 3.

THE WRITINGS OF JAMES GOULD Cozzens are revaluated in the winter *Pacific Spectator* by Frederick Bracker, who considers his four major novels to be *The Last Adam*, *Men and Brethren*, *The Just and the Unjust*, and *Guard of Honor*. Bracker regards Cozzens as a philosophic novelist in the same sense as George Eliot is, because he has a passion for analyzing and explaining what he observes. "Man thinking, as well as man acting, is Cozzens' subject matter," says Bracker. Cozzens values maturity above all else, Bracker continues. The typical Cozzens' hero is the middle-aged man who is fully formed, aware of his powers, not inhibited by a knowledge of his weaknesses, and hence assured. But Cozzens' "conception of people, like his conception of society, is curiously static." For another revaluation of Cozzens' novels see Granville Hicks's article in *College English* (January, 1950).

A REVALUATION OF THE WORKS OF Robert Louis Stevenson, by Christopher Isherwood, appears in the March *Tomorrow*. He replaces the legendary figure of Stevenson as the beloved storyteller who gladly sacrificed his life for art far from home with a portrait of a highly complex creature who is much more interesting. Stevenson, Isherwood thinks, throughout his life was struggling between his inherited Puritanism and his natural inclinations. His protagonists, in the flesh, were first his stern Scotch father and later his "violent" and "benevolently tyrannical" wife. Isherwood first identifies Stevenson with Barrie's Peter Pan (Barrie and Stevenson were close friends), suggesting that Peter's conflicts were Stevenson's, and then argues that *Treasure Island* is not just the account of a particular treasure hunt but a definite statement of a treasure-hunt daydream. But the symptoms of a tension which was dominant in Stevenson's character are most clearly expressed in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, where Stevenson's own mental conflict is projected through those two characters. His last work, the uncompleted *Weir of Hermiston*, Isherwood thinks, shows that Stevenson died with genius unimpaired and growing. The same issue of *Tomorrow* also includes a characteristic essay by Oliver St. John Gogarty entitled "My Friends Stephens and Dun-sany." It contains both biographical reminiscence and critical comment concerning the nature and quality of their writings.

BRITISH LAUREATE JOHN MASEFIELD writes two autobiographic essays in the *Atlantic* for March and April. Titling them "The Joy of Story-telling," Masefield relates the way in which he turned to writing as a profession and mentions the persons and influences which shaped his career. The cover of the March *Atlantic* features a painting of the poet against a background of seascapes and glimpses of English sporting life.

New Books

College Teaching Material

THE PLAY: A CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY.
 Edited by ERIC BENTLEY. Prentice-Hall. Pp.
 774. \$2.75.

An anthology designed to be used either privately or in classes and based on the idea that if you want to know something of the drama you may as well begin by reading plays. The nine plays included are: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Miser*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *Antigone*, *Ghosts*, *The Ghost Sonata*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Bentley provides commentaries of a kind to stimulate student cerebration. An Appendix contains five different reviews of *Death of a Salesman* and an article on "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures" by Erwin Panofsky.

TEN PLAYS: AN INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA. Edited by MORTON W. BLOOMFIELD and ROBERT C. ELLIOTT. Rinehart. Pp. 719. \$2.25. Paper-backed.

Designed for use in introduction to literature courses. Brief textual notes, biographies, and evaluations are provided, but critical comment is kept to the minimum. Ten plays are included: *Antigone*, *Othello*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Three Sisters*, *The Hairy Ape*, *The Male Animal*, and *The Little Foxes*.

NINE MODERN AMERICAN PLAYS. Edited by BARRETT H. CLARK and WILLIAM H. DAVENPORT. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 432. \$2.40.

A textbook containing nine diverse plays, each of which the editors feel is peculiarly American. They are: *The Hairy Ape*, *Street Scene*, *Green Grow the Lilacs*, *High Tor*, *Stage Door*, *You Can't Take It with You*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *Command Decision*.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE. By C. V. WEDGWOOD. Oxford University Press. Pp. 186. \$2.00.

A new volume in the English literature section of the "Home University Library" which is chiefly concerned with the literature of the English language written between 1600 and 1700, exclusive of Shakespeare. The author is a well-known literary historian.

THE RESEARCH REPORT: A GUIDE FOR THE BEGINNER. By ELLEN JOHNSON. Ronald Press. Pp. 141. \$1.75.

The purpose of this manual is to present a simplified procedure for introducing the inexperienced student to the essentials of research. Miss Johnson believes that attention should be focused upon the spirit of the investigation and the problem of presenting the results to the reader. This not only puts the emphasis where it belongs but helps the student understand the need for mechanics. Profusely illustrated with examples of student research.

ADVANCED WRITING. By ROBERT L. ZETLER and W. GEORGE CROUCH. Ronald Press. Pp. 270. \$3.25.

The authors presuppose the students' mastery of the mechanics. Attention is concentrated on the techniques of expression. The text progresses from the simple types of personal exposition to the more complex forms of description and narration. Includes many examples of student work as well as of professional writing.

JOURNALISM AND THE STUDENT PUBLICATION. By FREDERICK W. MAGUIRE and RICHARD M. SPONG. Harper. Pp. 431. \$3.20.

Basically a text for a course in the fundamentals of journalism, this book is distinguished by its emphasis on journalism as an educative force and the importance of the newspaper as a mass medium of communication. A chapter on building a career emphasizes the value of journalistic training in many positions other than the too frequently unattainable careers on

large metropolitan newspapers. Exercises and topics for class discussion which follow each chapter are selected to provide additional learning situations rather than to check whether students have read the chapters.

BEGINNING ENGLISH FOR MEN AND WOMEN: BOOK I. By T. A. ALLASINA and N. N. McLEOD. **BOOK II.** By T. A. ALLASINA, N. N. McLEOD, and ROLLAND UPTON. Cascade Pacific (5448 Forty-seventh S.W., Seattle). Pp. 107 and 105. \$1.88 each.

Workbooks which the authors have used with satisfaction in teaching English to adult immigrants. All four communication skills are practiced, with much blank-filling and choosing between alternatives. The narrative thread (slender) is of Peter and Olga (both twenty) going to school, and the vocabulary practical. At the end of Book II the material seems of at least fourth-grade difficulty.

A GUIDE TO CREATIVE WRITING. By ROGER H. GARRISON. Holt. Pp. 221. \$2.95.

A young junior-college teacher of creative writing who has had successful reporting and journalistic experience offers the advice he found most helpful to his classes: How to observe, to create verbal images, to construct plot, build character, . . . to rewrite effectively.

DECISION THROUGH DISCUSSION: A MANUAL FOR GROUP LEADERS. By WILLIAM E. UTTERBACK. 3d ed. Rinehart. Pp. 51. \$0.65.

THE NEW AMERICAN WEBSTER DICTIONARY. Signet. Pp. 414. \$0.25. Paper.

A "handy-sized" dictionary compiled by the National Lexicographic Board, Ltd. Typography is good, and definitions are lucid.

Films

DEATH OF A SALESMAN. By ARTHUR MILLER. Decca. 12-inch LP records, four sides, \$12.80; 12-inch standard records, 16 sides, \$14.15.

To call this man or that a "Willy Loman" was so convenient that Arthur Miller's character, like Babbitt, was in great danger of losing his humanity. Decca's release of *The Death of a Salesman* makes it immediately evident that no one connected with the original production thought in terms of type or played the roles in the self-conscious manner indicated by the critics who looked upon the play as a piece of sociological Americana. The recording is less successful in indicating the series of visual images which make up any play. Partly this is because Mr. Miller did not have to write the action into the lines so that you could follow by ear, as you can in a Shakespearean play, what is not visible to the eye. A teacher using the play in a class would have to provide a description of the set, the technique of shifting lights, and a good many technical matters of the same sort. The play *heard* is a good deal more impressionistic than the play *seen*; and, while the recording could be used with great effectiveness in a class already familiar with the text, it would be hopelessly confusing to a class without such preparation.

JOHN STEWART CARTER

CHICAGO TEACHERS COLLEGE

Reprints

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA. Edited with Introduction and notes by JOHN DOVER WILSON. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 262. \$2.50.

APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA. By JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN. Introduction by ANTON C. PEGIS. "Modern Library." Random House. Pp. 430. \$1.25.

SELECTED PROSE AND POETRY. By EDGAR ALLAN POE. Edited with an Introduction by W. H. AUDEN. Rinehart. Pp. 528. \$0.95. Paper-bound.

Professional

THORNDIKE-BARNHART COMPREHENSIVE DESK DICTIONARY. Edited by CLARENCE L. BARNHART. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1951. Pp. 896. \$2.75.

That the publishers of this dictionary do not intend to compete with the *ACD* or *Webster's New Collegiate* may be inferred from the following excerpts taken from the Preface: "This . . . dictionary [contains] the essential information

about the basic vocabulary necessary to carry on the daily affairs . . . these 80,000 words include all except the very technical terms . . . [which] have been selected on the basis of word counts . . . in every field of general interest" (italics mine).

With these emphases in mind, the impartial reviewer must conclude that the book is a distinct contribution. Take, as an example, the simplicity of the language used in defining many uncommon words, one of which is *abacus*. This dictionary begins the definition of this educational tool with the vivid and concrete word "frame," whereas the *ACD* and *Webster's* use such vague words as "instrument" and "contrivance." However, both these dictionaries do have excellent illustrations of this tool, whereas the *Thorndike-Barnhart* does not; in fact, it suffers in this respect when compared with the other two.¹

Another important contribution of this dictionary is the excellent job which Professor Perrin has done in summarizing the results of modern linguistic scholarship in the usage comments which are to be found under various entries—see his remarks on the use of *like* as a conjunction, and on *none*, *no one*, *farther*, *photo*, *et al.*

As to pronunciation, the *Thorndike-Barnhart* is to be commended for following the *ACD* in using the schwa (ə) to indicate the neutral vowel in unstressed syllables. On the other hand, I do not find "the more important variant pronunciations in use in the principal regions of the country" listed.² Neither are "all Americanisms completely . . . labeled," as is stated on the jacket.³

¹ It is my impression that *Webster's* has better illustrations (except for a series of fine maps) than the *ACD*. Some college teachers will also miss such charts and tables as the "Periodic Table of Elements," the "Indo-European Family of Languages," and the "Chief Foreign Alphabets," which are in *Webster's* but not in the other two.

² However, his comments under *each*, *nobody*, and *anyone*, *reason*, *when*—to mention a few which this reviewer noticed—are not in accord with the facts of usage.

³ Kenyon and Knott's *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* lists these variants.

⁴ *Angleworm*, *Annexationist*, *Apache*, and *artery* (meaning a "main road"; "important channel")—to mention a few entries which I checked—are listed as Americanisms in the *Dictionary of American English*, but they are not so labeled in the *Thorndike-Barnhart*.

The etymological information given in this dictionary will probably be sufficient for most of its users, although some will have to consult the other two for more detailed data.

Another commendable practice followed in this dictionary is the listing of all entries—no matter what their nature—in alphabetical order in the same section. There is no separate section on biographical data, no separate pronouncing gazetteer.

Finally, in the introductory section, both teachers of English and others interested in such matters will find a miniature "American English Grammar" by Professors Fries and Kitchin, in which they include some new and stimulating data not to be found in Fries's book on the same subject. Here, however, one misses Professor Fries's article on "Usage Levels and Dialect Distribution" which appears in the *ACD*. Readers will also find a somewhat different and valuable approach in Professor Marckwardt's organization of his comments on punctuation.

In this review I have rather briefly compared the *Thorndike-Barnhart* dictionary with two others, pointing out some of the advantages as well as some of the disadvantages. These comparisons certainly reinforce the contention of linguistic scholars and of some lexicographers that no one dictionary contains all the data one might need on certain occasions. Teachers of English should train students to consult another dictionary, and still another, whenever they fail to find certain information in any one of them.

RUSSELL THOMAS

NORTHERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

THE YOUNG SHELLEY. By KENNETH NEILL CAMERON. Macmillan. Pp. 437. \$6.00.

This work is a study of Shelley during his formative years (1809-13). Primarily it deals with his development as a radical thinker. Professor Cameron does not "view Shelley as a unique phenomenon" but as a brilliantly perceptive, a powerfully creative young man wrought upon by private experiences and reacting to the strong social ferment of the age in which he lived. Despite their cutting chances, on the whole these were the brave years of a spirit "tameless and swift and proud."

A feature of this work is that it presents 1,132 notes for 287 pages of text. Some of these notes, as in the case of those on *The Wandering Jew*, *The Necessity of Atheism*, and *Queen Mab* are

fully wrought pieces of research. I make the point because the outstanding characteristic of *The Young Shelley* is reputableness: sound judgments based upon an examination of sufficient data. Perhaps Professor Cameron achieves little more than a synthesis of the best scholarship, that by Blunden, Hughes, Ingpen, and White; yet such a synthesis is much. His use of materials from the earlier writers—Hogg, Medwin, Dowden, *et al.*—may at times seem advantageous. But there is "newness" in his book, "newness" coming mainly from three sources: the biographical, social, and historical source; the psychological; and that of personal interpretation.

The use of material from the first source is an established practice. It illuminates the milieu of Shelley and deepens the perspective in which we may study his deeds. Here Professor Cameron has been industrious in his search for data and ingenious in his use of them. Only in the minor instance of quoting the Earl of Chichester's letter (p. 169) from the incorrect version given by Denis MacCarthy when he might have transcribed the original in the Huntington Library does he seem infelicitous. The "newness" gained from psychological speculation, however, can only be regretted, since it leads to literary pseudoblepsis. Professor Cameron himself rightly says "Shelley is essentially important not for his life but for his works." It is in dealing with these works that the author is at his best. One might instance his study of *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough, A Refutation of Deism*, and *Queen Mab*. Especially excellent is his study of Shelley's first "great poem," both in his determining the events which lie around the writing of it and in his analysis of the poem itself. The new emphasis which he gives to these important works will not be forgotten.

BENNETT WEAVER

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS. Edited by THOMAS M. RAYSOR. Modern Language Association of America. Pp. 241. \$2.85.

This critical review of research dealing with the English Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century is a co-operative project of specialist members of the Modern Language Association. Its special purpose is to furnish help to the graduate student who is beginning a specialized study of the field. The chapters of "The

Romantic Movement" and on "Wordsworth" are contributed by Ernest Bernbaum; that on "Coleridge" by Thomas Raysor and René Wellek, "Byron" by Samuel C. Chew, "Shelley" by Bennett Weaver, and "Keats" by Clarence D. Thorpe. An indispensable reference book for the nineteenth-century specialist.

A HANDBOOK TO DANTE STUDIES. By UMBERTO COSMO. Translated by DAVID MOORE from the Italian *Guido a Dante*. Barnes & Noble. Pp. 194. \$3.75.

"An integrative personal survey of countless problems to which numerous scholars have bent their energies." The last work of the great Italian Dante authority, the late Umberto Cosmo. Its tone and style are indicated by Cosmo's own definition of its purpose: "Mere factual information does not constitute knowledge. We are truly knowledgeable about a given fact only if we are aware of the process by which it has been established."

ENGLISH LITERATURE, 1600-1800, Vol. I: A Bibliography of Modern Studies. Compiled for the *Philological Quarterly*, by RONALD S. CRANE, LOUIS I. BREDVOLD, RICHMOND P. BOND, ARTHUR FRIEDMAN, and LOUIS A. LANDA. Princeton University Press. Pp. 575. \$5.00.

Since 1926 the *Philological Quarterly* has been publishing annually a bibliography of the year's studies of the eighteenth century. The original issues are here exactly reproduced by photolithography, with retention of all reviews, brief comments, and evaluations. This volume covers the years 1926-38. An index to both volumes will be provided in the second volume, which will cover 1939-50.

MEDIEVAL SKEPTICISM AND CHAUCER. By MARY EDITH THOMAS. William-Frederick Press. Pp. 184. \$3.00.

The first half of this book sets forth and discusses the representative writings of medieval skeptics, those people whose "studie was but litel on the Bible." The second half investigates the impact of their thinking upon Chaucer's writing. The author's conclusion is that Chaucer, as the "mirror of his age," was keenly aware of the skeptics but that his own faith seems not to have been shaken.

NEXT TO SHAKESPEARE. By ALINE MACKENZIE TAYLOR. Duke University Press. Pp. 328. \$6.00.

Anyone who loves the theater will be delighted with this study of Thomas Otway's *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* and the detailed account of their history on the London stage. The author approaches the plays through the actors who interpreted the characters and the audiences who through two centuries applauded them. Both return to life, and the reader catches fresh-made the changing conceptions of character parts and their reception by the volatile audiences who preceded the reign of Queen Victoria.

POEMS OF CATULLUS. Edited by WILLIAM A. AIKEN. Dutton. Pp. 248. \$3.00.

A new collection assembled in commemoration of the two-thousandth anniversary of the poet's death. The translations into English have been selected from the best which have been made throughout the years. The translators range from Cowper, Swift, and Byron to such contemporary poets as Thomas Hardy, Horace Gregory, and F. P. Adams.

GOETHE AND WORLD LITERATURE. By FRITZ STRICH. Translated from the German by C. A. M. SYM. Hafner Publishing Co., 1949. Pp. 360. \$5.50.

The genesis of this volume was a series of lectures given long ago at London University. The present study was originally published in Switzerland in 1945 and is now for the first time published in the United States. The contents are divided into three parts under the headings "Goethe's Idea of World Literature," "Benefits Received," and "Goethe's Mission to Europe." Professor Strich writes that "by world literature Goethe understood the sphere of the intellect in which through their literatures the world's peoples learn to know and respect each other, and in a common effort seek to rise to higher levels of culture." This is the thesis of his book.

SHAKESPEARE'S HERALDRY. By C. W. SCOTT-GILES. Dutton. Pp. 237. \$6.00.

A fascinating volume not only for the Shakespearean and heraldic scholar but for anyone interested in the art and life of our forebears. A lucid Introduction provides a working knowl-

edge of the terms of heraldry. Another chapter discusses the arms granted to Shakespeare's father and inherited by his children. The major portion of the book discusses Shakespeare's historical plays. Taking the plays in historical sequence, Scott-Giles describes and displays in clear line drawings the shields and heraldic achievements of the various characters of the plays. Thus we find that in the time of King John heraldic devices were primarily a method of identifying the armored warrior in the field, and in staging *King John* it would be incorrect to have anything but the distinctive shield and banner or pennon. By the time of Henry VIII, however, the transformation of heraldry from military uses to the purposes solely of decoration and pageantry was completed. Fully illustrated in line and color by the author.

THE GEORGIAN LITERARY SCENE, 1910 TO 1923. By FRANK SWINNERTON. Farrar, Straus & Young. Pp. 415. \$4.00.

This volume has already run through six English editions since 1935 and is now for the first time published in the United States, newly revised but not carried beyond the reign of George V. Swinnerton says that "it reads as if it were being talked" because that was his design. He wanted to produce a study expressing his own views on current literature which could be enjoyed by those without professional interest in the subject. He starts with Henry James and ends with T. S. Eliot and the New Academicism. The illustrations are photographs of the busts of nine authors sculptured by Jo Davidson.

AGE OF SURREALISM. By WALLACE FOWLER. William Morrow. Pp. 203. \$3.00.

A study of the surrealist movement by a well-known scholar of French literature, who discusses eight of the most important men in the movement: Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Apollinaire, Breton, Cocteau, Éluard, and Picasso.

THACKERAY: A RECONSIDERATION. Edited by J. Y. T. GREIG. Oxford University Press. Pp. 215. \$3.00.

This book is not a biography, but a comparison of Thackeray's life and writings to show how the deviousness and instability of his mind affected his molding of his materials. Carlyle

described Thackeray as "very uncertain and chaotic in all points except his outer breeding, which is *fixed enough*." Professor Greig says the trouble with Thackeray was that he could never bring himself to accept the code of the Victorians, but neither could he set the code aside and declare himself a rebel. He traces many of Thackeray's weaknesses as a novelist to this indecisiveness of his nature.

THE CRITICAL OPINIONS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. By MARKHAM L. PEACOCK, JR. John Hopkins Press. Pp. 469. \$6.00.

This study is primarily a catalogue of Wordsworth's literary opinions. It is divided into three sections containing Wordsworth's critical comments on literary principles and subjects, on various authors and their works, and on his own verse and prose. Its purpose is to help students of the poet by describing the amount of his criticism, the extent of his critical limitations, the breadth of many of his critical attitudes, the originality and independence of his views, and the keenness and penetration of his comments.

THE PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES OF JOHN DRYDEN. By WILLIAM BRADFORD GARDNER. Columbia University Press. Pp. 361. \$4.50.

A systematic edition of all 102 of Dryden's prologues and epilogues, the text of each of which is based on the last edition known to have been revised by Dryden himself. Dryden's own spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been retained, so as to preserve the pronunciations and meanings that Dryden presumably intended. Explanatory notes have all been relegated to an appendix and printed in type large enough to be read without squinting. Since this is the first time that all Dryden's prologues and epilogues have been printed in a single volume and since this is well printed and critically edited, it should provide valuable help to all students of the period.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THOMAS PERCY AND SIR THOMAS WARTON. Edited by M. G. ROBINSON and LEAH DENNIS. ("The Percy Letters," Vol. III.) Louisiana State University Press. Pp. 189. \$3.50.

This volume is the third in a series being issued under the general editorship of David

Nichol Smith and Cleanth Brooks. The letters between Percy and Warton cover the period between 1760 and 1778 and contain much of interest concerning Percy's methods of gathering materials for the *Reliques* and for his other scholarly projects.

SWIFT'S SATIRE ON LEARNING IN "A TALE OF A TUB." By MIRIAM KOSH STARKMAN. Princeton University Press. Pp. 159. \$3.00.

This revaluation of *A Tale of a Tub* makes it appear a contemporary document. Mrs. Starkman has restricted her study to Swift's satire on learning and has examined it in relation to the intellectual background against which Swift wrote it. One of her most interesting findings is the fact that the apparent formlessness of the *Tale* is rather a most carefully integrated parody of eighteenth-century learning. Rereading the *Tale* in the light of Mrs. Starkman's commentaries is to find that many of Swift's satiric thrusts might very well have been directed against the scholasticism of our own day.

WALT WHITMAN—POET OF SCIENCE. By JOSEPH BEAVER. King's Crown Press. Pp. 178. \$2.75.

The author believes that Walt Whitman was the first American poet to face boldly the problem of relating science to literature, and the purpose of his book is to show how Whitman went about reconciling science with poetry, and to evaluate the degree of success he achieved. His conclusion is that Whitman saw what nearly all his predecessors had failed to see, "that science, far from desiccating, could greatly enrich poetry."

MILTON AND MELVILLE. By HENRY F. POMMER. University of Pittsburgh Press. Pp. 172. \$5.00.

A study of the influence of Milton on Herman Melville in respect both to Melville's use of source materials and to the development of his style, with particular reference to the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and *Moby-Dick*.

THE PURSUIT OF DIARMUID AND GRAUNIA. By JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON. Oxford University Press. Pp. 180. \$2.50.

Mr. Anderson has created his own fresh and lovely epic poem from the materials of the old

Gaelic legend of Diarmuid and Graunia. In some respects he follows fairly closely one or another of several manuscript sources of the poem, but, as he himself writes, he has treated the legendary material with considerable freedom, "with as much freedom, for instance, as a Greek Tragic author would have employed in the treatment of any of the old myths which formed the foundation of his tragedy." An appendix contains scholarly notes.

THE ROMANCE OF TRISTRAM AND YSOLT. By THOMAS OF BRITAIN. Translated from the Old French and Old Norse by ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS. Columbia University Press. Pp. 293. \$3.50.

A new, revised edition of a volume first issued in 1931 and long out of print. The Preface has been revised and the Bibliography brought up to date.

SELECTED POEMS OF JOHN CLARE. Edited by GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Harvard University Press. Pp. 246. \$2.10.

The Introduction provides a revaluation of the poems of "the poet peasant from Helpston," as well as biographical notes; the text presents a careful selection of the major works of a minor poet.

FÉNELON'S DIALOGUES ON ELOQUENCE. Translated with an Introduction and notes by WILBUR SAMUEL HOWELL. Princeton University Press. Pp. 160. \$3.00.

A new translation of a famous sixteenth-century statement concerning the art of communication.

THE PREFIGURATIVE IMAGINATION OF JOHN KEATS. By NEWELL F. FORD. Stanford University Press. Pp. 168. \$2.50. Paper-bound.

A study of the meaning of Keats's celebrated identification of "beauty" and "truth" and a reinterpretation of many of the poems in the light of the new findings in which the study has resulted. Keats's sanity and his relativistic conception of truth are both reaffirmed.

SPIRES OF FORM: A STUDY OF EMERSON'S AESTHETIC THEORY. By VIVIAN C. HOPKINS. Harvard University Press. Pp. 276. \$4.00.

Miss Hopkins relates Emerson's ideas on art and literature to his philosophical concepts and produces a revaluation of his thinking which shows that in many ways Emerson anticipated modern psychological theories.

GÉRARD DE NERVAL, 1808-1855. By S. A. RHODES. Philosophical Library. Pp. 416. \$4.75.

A study of the life and works of the forerunner of the symbolist poets Baudelaire and Rimbaud by a scholar in the field of modern French literature.

CREATIVE BROADCASTING. By H. J. SKORNIA, ROBERT H. LEE, and FRED A. BREWER. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 416. \$4.75.

This book is designed particularly for laymen and students who are beginning to work in radio production with limited means and facilities. Part I contains basic information necessary to preparation for broadcasting. It discusses such matters as auditioning and casting, music and copyright clearance, nondramatic programs, etc. Part II comprises twelve scripts free for broadcast and class use, graded in type and length, and accompanied by complete production notes.

PLAY PRODUCTION: A GUIDEBOOK FOR THE PLAYGOER: A HANDBOOK FOR THE BACKSTAGE WORKER. By HENNING NELMS. Barnes & Noble. Pp. 301. \$3.25.

A handbook which discusses every phase of play production from the initial organizing of the sponsoring group to the last curtain call. Will interest anyone who enjoys the theater and wants to know how the wheels go round, but should be of especial value as a guide for amateur theatrical groups.

FUNCTIONS OF A MODERN UNIVERSITY: PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST SYMPOSIUM SPONSORED BY THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK. Pp. 361. \$1.00.

The symposium was held in Buffalo in January, 1950, and was attended by more than two thousand persons—educators, parents, students, and outstanding figures in the cultural arts and in government service. This abridged report of the proceedings includes speeches by Robert

Hutchins, James B. Conant, and Thomas E. Dewey and reports of panel discussions on "Education and the Community," "The Cultural Arts," "The Needs of Young People," and others.

THE HISTORY OF SPEECH EDUCATION AT COLUMBIA COLLEGE (1754-1940).

By HELEN P. ROACH. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University. Pp. 134. \$2.35.

The object of this study is to find out by what means and with what degree of success the goal of "developing facility in the use of the mother tongue" was reached during different periods in the history of Columbia College. In the eighteenth century there was considerable interest in speech education: in the nineteenth century it gradually diminished until speech disappeared from the curriculum; in the twentieth century interest in speech was renewed among both educators and students. The author concludes that the responsibility for an adequate program of speech education rests squarely upon the speech educators themselves.

DEMOCRACY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Edited by HAROLD BENJAMIN. Harper. Pp. 240. \$3.00.

The Tenth Yearbook of the John Dewey Society. The contents are divided into three parts. The first discusses the principles in the administration of higher education, the second the practices, and the third the responsibility of administration. The twelve authors of the volume are administrators and teachers whose jobs require constant concern with problems of organizing and administering higher educational institutions.

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

By ERNEST E. LEISY. University of Oklahoma Press. \$3.75.

This book has been written for the intelligent lay reader who is interested in the nation's past and who wants a rather full account of the material and methods of American historical fiction. Arranged by historical periods—"Colonial America," "The American Revolution and Aftermath," "Western Movement," "Civil War and Reconstruction," "National Expansion." Each novel is analyzed, evaluated, and related to others in the same category.

THE WRITERS ART: A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES. Edited by WALLACE STEGNER, RICHARD SCOWCROFT, and BORIS ILGIN. Heath. Pp. 358. \$3.00.

The editors offer a dual approach to the short story. They present eleven stories, from Petronius to Irwin Shaw and Thomas Heggen, with their own analyses—from the outside. Then they present six stories with explanation of the origin and development of each by their authors—James, Walter V. T. Clark, Dorothy Canfield, Stegner, Jessamyn West, and Bessier Breuer. It is aimed at writers but should be useful to readers also.

THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH. By

DANIEL JONES. 3d ed. Cambridge University Press (51 Madison Ave., New York 10). Pp. 206. \$2.00.

The most famous of contemporary British phoneticians has entirely rewritten this treatise on the sounds of English. He still uses the term "Received Pronunciation," but says that it is not a standard and that to attempt to create a standard would be undesirable. His description of the variety of similar sounds which compose such phonemes as *aw* must interest even the rankest amateur. Charts and diagrams and one plate of X-ray pictures. His persistent representation of *o* as in "more" by [ɔ], the symbol for our *aw*, will surprise most Americans; some of us say "knowledge" but not "mow."

TELEVISION AND OUR CHILDREN. By

ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON. Longmans. Pp. 94. \$1.50.

In a series of essays originally published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, Shayon examines the attitudes of parents, teachers, broadcasters, and psychologists regarding the effects of television upon children. All seem to agree that there are now many bad effects. The writer sees listeners' councils of aroused citizens as a pressure group which might turn the tide to better TV programs. He also sees TV as a challenge which must be met by educators in the form of really effective educational television stations.

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICANISMS.

Edited by MITFORD M. MATHEWS. 2 vols. University of Chicago Press. \$50.

An etymological dictionary of 50,000 words "made in America." Mathews has found that frontier life has contributed more Americanisms

than any other single factor. Industrial terms rank next in frequency.

THE SMALL COLLEGE TALKS BACK.

By WILLIAM W. HALL, JR. Richard R. Smith (130 E. Thirty-ninth St., New York City). Pp. 214. \$3.00.

The former president of the College of Idaho writes of the problems faced by the small, church-related college in recent years. Written with emphasis upon the liberal and Christian tradition. Controversial.

Pamphlets

DO CITIZENS AND EDUCATION MIX?

Governor's Fact-finding Commission on Education (Hartford, Conn.). Pp. 159. \$0.50.

The answer to the question in the title is "Yes" according to a commission of citizens in Connecticut. Headed by Editor Norman Cousins of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the commission found out that public schools are just as good as the communities make them. This booklet is a combination report of the Connecticut group and a handbook for other groups of interested citizens.

GOLD STAR LIST OF AMERICAN FICTION.

Syracuse Public Library (Syracuse 2). Pp. 57. \$0.75.

One half, a list arranged by authors and annotated; the other half, a list by topics giving authors and titles only. The thirty-sixth year of publication. Notable books of 1950 on inside front cover.

THE READING-EASE CALCULATOR. Science Research Associates (228 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 4).

This gadget was developed in the Employee Research Section of General Motors. Count off one hundred words; count the sentences in it and set the dial by that; count the number of syllables, and the color opposite this number on the scale indicates degree of readability. Fascinating, but limited to sentence length and word length.

SELECTED LIST OF HUMAN RELATIONS FILMS. Film Division, American Jewish Committee (386 Fourth Ave., New York 16). Pp. 28. \$0.15.

The entries are annotated with names of producers and in most cases of two to four rental agencies. Running times are given, but not rental cost. Most of the films are marked "Not suggested for youth groups under senior high school age."

Nonfiction

WILLA CATHER: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION. By DAVID DAICHES. Cornell University Press. \$2.75.

This book by the indefatigable Professor Daiches is more "introductory" than "critical." It consists chiefly of thorough summaries, with interpolated comment. Though the last chapter is labeled "Final Estimate," its larger part is a sampling of Willa Cather's verse. Some of Daiches' judgments are quite discerning—for instance, on *The Professor's House* and "The Best Years." He sketches clearly the complex structure and shifting narrative focus of *My Antonia*, but he does not credit its subtly unifying principle, the trend and cumulative mood of Jim Burden's total experience. Neither does he remark a vast and timely implicativeness beneath the delicately etched surface of *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*. He makes relevant use of Willa Cather's statements on the art of fiction.

He points informatively to historical and cultural consciousness, aestheticism, and nostalgia pervading her work. However, it would be unfortunate if this book, in which synopsis dominates, were substituted for the novels themselves or for more systematic critical consideration of Willa Cather's achievement as a whole.

WARREN BECK

LAWRENCE COLLEGE

THEODORE DREISER. By F. O. MATTHIESSEN. "American Men of Letters Series." Duell, Sloan. \$3.50.

The first chapter deals with the poverty of Dreiser's boyhood and the significance of his early life in relation to his later dread of poverty and defeat which was a source of his power as a writer. "His fiction would rise from deep rhythms of feeling." Lengthy discussions of his

newspaper days, young manhood, tragedies of life, philosophy, politics, and religion. Dreiser was caught by an overwhelming sense of the flow of life, mysterious beyond any probing.

THE WORLD OF WILLA CATHER. By MILDRED R. BENNETT. Dodd, Mead. \$3.50.

The author has for some years lived in Willa Cather's old home—Red Cloud, Nebraska. She knows some of the people who still remember Miss Cather and the many descendants of other old friends and neighbors. To Miss Cather these early pioneers did not live narrow lives, and most of the characters in her novels were drawn from them and their experiences. An enjoyable book, charmingly written.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE. By MARGARET CASE HARRIMAN. Rinehart. \$3.00.

The "Circle," which met at New York's Algonquin Hotel, consisted of Dorothy Parker, Heywood Broun, Alexander Woollcott, Robert Benchley, George Kaufman, Edna Ferber, Robert Sherwood, and other famous wits and writers of the twenties and thirties. The author pictures entertainingly their mannerisms, quips, and wisecracks, as well as their ideals and accomplishments. Clever drawings by Hirschfeld. The Circle was responsible for the founding of the *New Yorker*.

POETRY AND DRAMA. By T. S. ELIOT. Harvard University Press. Pp. 45. \$1.50.

The first Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecture at Harvard, also printed in the *Atlantic*. After a tribute to Eliot's friend Spencer, it tries to find the secrets of successful verse plays (which become poetry in spots) by examining some of Shakespeare's successes and Eliot's own attempts. Eliot considers the *verse* play desirable because it can work unnoticed upon the feelings of the audience and can carry connotations which cannot be expressed directly.

THE KENYON CRITICS: STUDIES IN MODERN LITERATURE FROM THE "KENYON REVIEW." Edited by JOHN CROWE RANSOM. World. \$4.00.

Typical utterances from the magazine which is almost the official organ of the New Criticism. For the serious student of literature.

THE DROOD MURDER CASE: FIVE STUDIES IN DICKENS' "EDWIN DROOD." By RICHARD M. BAKER. University of California Press. \$3.00.

Studies of Dickens' unfinished novel. Was Drood actually murdered? Who was Dick Datchery? Who was the Opium Woman, and why did she pursue John Jasper? Baker answers these questions. He examines letters written by Dickens, earlier Dickens stories, and stories which Dickens edited for publication. He identifies John Jasper with Dickens himself.

THE SACRED RIVER. By L. A. G. STRONG. Pellegrini & Cudahy. \$2.75.

Mr. Strong discusses eight points of focus which have influenced him in his study of Joyce: vivid memories of Dublin as Joyce knew it as a child and the same city ten years later; interest in singing and the subconscious mind; a taste for metaphysical speculation; practice in writing and an interest in the borderland where one level of consciousness shades into another; Irish blood and love of Ireland; frequent recourse to Shakespeare, Swift, and Blake; and belief in Christian revelation.

THE FRASER. By BRUCE HUTCHISON. Rinehart. \$4.00.

Forty-second volume of the "Rivers of America Series." The Fraser, says Mr. Hutchison, is one of the basic political and economic facts of America. This is the story of its discovery and development, with emphasis upon its importance. Gold, the fur trade, salmon fishing, the first inhabitants, old trails, are the subjects of interesting accounts. A choice river book for collectors. Illustrated.

"THE AMERICAN ARTS LIBRARY": PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH ART. By RUTH ADAMS. CURRIER AND IVES. By F. A. CONNINGHAM. World. \$1.00 each.

A new and attractive series on folk art. Included are *Pennsylvania Dutch Art*, *Currier and Ives*, *American Rugs*, *American Glass*, *American Silver*, *Early American Firearms*. Illustrated in black and white, with seven pages of color plates. Currier and Ives prints and the Pennsylvania Dutch are much in favor, and this full information should satisfy a demand. Each seventy-two pages, about 5 × 7½.

THE PARIS WE LOVE. Edited by DORÉ OGRIZEK. "World in Color Series." McGraw-Hill. \$6.50.

A gay and colorful guidebook, with more than three hundred full-color illustrations and nineteen maps. Writers include André Maurois, Jean Cocteau, Jules Romain, André Bender, and others. Opens with the Middle Ages. Arranged in geographical districts and under such heads as, "The Home of the Epicure," "Paris Nights," "Montmartre Art in Paris," "The Latin Quarter," "The Ballad of the Champs-Élysées," and many others. Brilliant full-color reproductions of masterpieces. The many other colored illustrations are very beautiful.

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW. By ETHEL WATERS and CHARLES SAMUELS. Doubleday. \$3.00.

A cheerful autobiography of the colored actress, Ethel Waters. A truly surprising story of a woman who made good against fearful obstacles and through it all kept her religious faith. Thought-provoking. Co-selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club for March.

MY PATIENTS WERE ZULUS. By JAMES B. McCORD with JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS. Rinehart. \$3.00.

Dr. McCord and his family arrived in Durban, South Africa, in 1899. In time they built clinics, dispensaries, and a nurses' training school. With the aid of his wife he established a pleasant relationship with the Zulus, started a school for Zulu doctors, and built a hospital. He was retired by the American Missionary Board in 1940—when he reached seventy.

STATEMENT ON RACE. By ASHLEY MONTAGUE. Schuman. \$2.00.

The paragraphs of the "UNESCO Statement by Experts on Race Problems" are reprinted one by one with elaborations by the editor of the original statement. In sum, biological differences between ethnic groups are due to prolonged differences of environment and do not extend to mental and moral capacities (of infants).

RED MEN CALLING ON THE GREAT WHITE FATHER. By KATHERINE C. TURNER. University of Oklahoma Press. \$3.75.

"Brothers," said the century-old Creek, Speckled Snake, "I have listened to a great many tales from our great fathers. But they always began and ended like this—'Get a little further; you are too near me.'" For two centuries Indian chieftains made the journey to the White House to beg of the President the privilege of holding the lands of their forefathers against the encroaching white settlers. The last visit was to President Taft in 1911. The author writes with deep respect of the dignity with which the Indians have met the injustices of our Indian policy. Photographs. Good.

THE KOREANS AND THEIR CULTURE. By CORNELIUS OSGOOD. Ronald. \$5.00.

The author, professor of anthropology at Yale University, has made extensive research in China, with special interest in the Koreans, whose ancestors came from Manchuria and Siberia. He has been assisted in this work by both Chinese and Korean colleagues. The story opens with a picture of a typical contemporary village and a view of Seoul. There is a discussion of the political history and of Korean culture, which has developed distinctive social and religious customs. The final chapters deal with modern Korea and the events of 1950.

THE BURDEN OF EGYPT. By JOHN A. WILSON. University of Chicago Press. \$6.00.

An interpretation of ancient Egyptian culture. The author, who has spent many years in Egypt, is a professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He says: "This is not a history of ancient Egypt, but rather a book about ancient Egyptian history. . . . We are here attempting to discover the values inherent in Egyptian culture and inevitably we shall consider value in a modern sense. . . . What we need today is a sense of our relative position in the process of human existence and a sense of general values." Illustrated. End maps. 332 pages. About 7 x 10.

THE HERO OF HIS TIME. By HENRY GIFFORD. Longmans. \$2.50.

Gifford sees as dominant in the outburst of Russian literature following the defeat of Napoleon and the contact of so many Russians with the more democratic countries a common type of hero. From Pushkin on, the heroes are somewhat Byronic in their despair, which arises out of the impossible social and political conditions under Czar Alexander I and his immedi-

ate successors. Gifford thinks that by becoming acquainted with this literature we shall come to understand the Russian people better.

KAHLIL GIBRAN: A BIOGRAPHY. By MIKHAIL NAIMY. Philosophical Library. Pp. 265.

The life of the Lebanese poet, philosopher, and artist, whose translated works have met with critical favor.

SAVONAROLA: A VERSE PLAY. By WALLACE A. BACON. Bookman Associates. \$2.50.

This verse play of Savonarola's struggle against political and religious corruption in fifteenth-century Florence received the Bishop Sheil Drama Award, with mention of its "emotional depth, sustained drive, and poetic power."

Fiction, Poetry, Drama

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY. By JAMES JONES. Scribner's. \$4.50.

Gentlemen—rankers out on a spree,
Damned from here to eternity,
God ha' mercy on such as we,
Ba! Yah! Bah!

KIPLING

The young author writes out of firsthand experience a novel not of war but of the army. The setting is Hawaii just before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Out of the human raw material of the United States Regular Army, Jones tells a merciless story of men caught in a life which has few illusions. Some of the men are or have been capable of rising to better things, but their daily living is revolting. There are women, too. The author uses vulgar language to express their thoughts and actions. A devastating picture which enforces the conviction that the flotsam and jetsam of war and its aftermath are as dangerous to society as are bombs and artillery. 861 pages.

WORLD SO WIDE. By SINCLAIR LEWIS. Random House. \$3.00.

When his wife was killed in an automobile accident, Hayden Chart, Colorado architect, thirty-five, decided to spend a year in Europe. He went to Florence not as a tourist but as an enthusiastic student of the culture of medieval Italy. There he became one of the American colony. An unflattering picture of Europe of today and of the American animal abroad. Many characters, much conversation; satire, ridicule, pretense. Lewis makes his points, but the story is less forceful than earlier books.

THE EYES OF REASON. By STEFAN HEYM. Little, Brown. \$3.75.

A novel of the recent violent changes and the political cross-currents of life in Czechoslo-

vakia. Three brothers—a doctor, an industrialist, and an intellectual—and their families are representative.

MORNING JOURNEY. By JAMES HILTON. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

Hollywood background. Carey Arundel was unhappily married to Paul, a film producer. After divorce, Carey married again, but, when she learned that Paul had wrecked his life, she dedicated hers to building him up. Hilton fans may not cheer for it, but it is a Literary Guild selection for March.

THE AGE OF LONGING. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. \$3.50.

The setting is Paris of the mid-fifties. Hydie, an American girl educated in Europe, had a feeling of insecurity. She turned to Nikitin, a Communist who professed to love her, as she searched for a belief to cling to. Eventually she realized that Nikitin was corrupt. A study of doubt and longing in an age of insecurity. It makes us think. Powerful!

ROUND THE BEND. By NEVIL SHUTE. Morrow. \$3.50.

A story with a religious element. Connie, a half-Chinese engineer working on an African freight airline, preaches a religion of work and eventually becomes a Messiah-like figure to thousands of Orientals. Appealing. March co-selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

TROUBLED SLEEP. By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. Knopf. \$3.50.

The Age of Reason and *The Reprieve* preceded this volume. Some characters are in all three books. In June, 1940, France fell. Sartre tells the story with sympathy and understand-

TYPES AND TECHNICS IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION

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Designed for freshman composition courses, this new text combines the essential principles of writing with an illustrative anthology. The four standard types of composition—exposition, argument, description, and narration—are discussed regarding both form and subject matter. Each of the 115 selections is followed by a brief analysis of structure and style with suggestions for a similar composition. *About 352 pp.*

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